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THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

A Popular Exposition of the Doctrine of the Atonement

BY

JAMES M. CAMPBELL, D.D.

Author of

"After Pentecost, What?" "The Indwelling Christ," etc.

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PREFACE

THERE is perhaps no doctrine of Scripture regarding which Christian teachers of to-day are more at sea than the doctrine of the Atonement. In the following pages an attempt has been made to present that doctrine in a popular and practical form, in its relation to modern thought, and with due regard to its historical perspective. Special attention has been given to the recent literature on the subject. Theological questions are considered as questions of the soul and of the religious life, and not merely or mainly as questions of the intellect. The point of view which is occupied is that of the preacher, who, in a time of transition, is trying to find for himself and for others a bit of solid standing-ground upon which faith can plant her feet and confidently affirm, "Whatever else is uncertain, this much is sure." In other words, the thing sought for is to find the basis for the new evangel which is to bring in the new evangelism, in a conception of the Atonement which is at once vital, reasonable, and preachable.

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I

INTRODUCTION

The heart of the Gospel is the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and the interpretation of that sacrifice is the foremost problem of theology.

Not a few sorely baffled souls seek to satisfy themselves by occupying the position that it is enough to hold the fact of the Atonement without attempting to formulate any theory concerning it. But such a position is untenable. It involves intellectual suicide. To think is to theorise. A theory of some sort is an intellectual necessity; for a theory is simply a more or less clearly defined interpretation of a fact. A thinking mind cannot face a fact of any kind without attempting to interpret it. And to the thoughtful Christian, the grandeur and importance of the fact of the Atonement invite inquiry into its nature. The sublime mystery into which angels desire to look, is one to which his searching gaze will instinctively be turned. A rational and working theory of the Atonement is something for which perforce he must seek diligently until he finds it.

Many modern theologians in carefully and persistently avoiding the committing of themselves to any theory of the Atonement, seem to forget that in so doing they are virtually avoiding an explanation of the transcendent fact. And surely an attempted explanation of the fact is precisely the thing which we have a right to expect from any one who discusses the subject. A recent writer has well said, "There is no fact

in the world without a theory, and we cannot and dare not leave the most stupendous fact of all to a blank unintelligibility. We are told that the cross is intimately and vitally connected with the forgiveness of sin and the salvation of the soul. We simply cannot help asking, 'How?' 'Why?' In other words, we want a theory to account for the fact."[1] It is interesting to note in this connection that Dr. R. F. Horton, who in "Faith and Criticism" stoutly maintained the impossibility of ever arriving at a satisfactory theory of the Atonement, has abandoned that position, and in his article on "The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought" admits that a theory of the Atonement is at once desirable, possible, and necessary.

It is not implied in what has been said that a full-orbed view of the Atonement is essential to salvation. A man may be a Christian and have but a very dim and shadowy conception of Christ's sacrifice. He is not saved by any theory of the Atonement, but by Christ himself. With a simple faith he may cling to Christ for salvation without a clear understanding of the rationale of Christ's action in his salvation. In other words, he may be saved without knowing anything of the nature of the Atonement by which he is saved, just as a man may perform the functions of life without knowing anything about the nature of life. But in this state of ignorance he ought not to be content to remain. For his own sake first, and for apologetic purposes afterwards, he ought to seek to find out the reason of the hope that is in him. And this search for the hope that is in him will lead him sooner or later

[1] "The Elims of Life," J. D. Jones, p. 61.

to study with bared head and throbbing heart the sacred mystery of the Atonement. What he sees and finds in it will measure his conception of what Christ has done for him. The more complete his knowledge, the greater will be its power over him; for any fact influences us just in so far as we know and understand it. Dr. J. R. Illingworth is therefore justified in saying that "the Atonement could not have moved the hearts and consciences of men unless it had, in a measure, been intellectually understood. And in a measure—a sufficient measure—it is intellectually intelligible." [2]

To the preacher especially some theory of the Atonement is necessary. Without it his message will be pointless and forceless. "The simplest preacher," says Dr. Denney, "and the most effective, is always the most absolutely theoretical. It is a theory, a tremendous theory, that Christ's death is death *for sin*." [3] Sinful men want to know, need to know, what difference it has made to them that Jesus Christ has undertaken their case, and that on their behalf He tabernacled on earth, and for their offences died upon the Cross of Calvary. In order that the Church may have a satisfactory answer to give to this heart-aching inquiry, she is compelled to crystallise her faith into dogma. An undogmatic Church is voiceless, and is void of propagating power. The Church of to-day will recover her converting power when she becomes evangelically dogmatic; and she will become evangelically dogmatic when she remints her message into modern thought-forms, giving to "the everlasting gospel" new interpretations, and new applications.

[2] "Christian Character," p. 18.

[3] "The Death of Christ," p. 121.

Any study on this great subject that does not root itself in the soil of the past, and that does not follow in the wake of the historic Church, will profit but little. Every doctrine must be studied in the light of its historical development. The present is heir to the past. The strong thinkers of bygone days who brooded over this high theme, did not spend their strength for naught. The dogmatic statements which afforded them a mental resting place, and from which they drew spiritual nourishment, are not to be lightly esteemed. They are something more than "the shreds of shattered theories"; they are watermarks of religious thought; they are strata in the deposit which the onsweeping tide of Christian thought has left behind it. If, like all human things, they had their day and ceased to be, as they passed away they helped to nourish the spiritual life of men, as the leaf nourishes the tree from which it falls.

The various theories of the Atonement which have been held, and which have had their place in the evolution of Christian doctrine, drew their colouring from the ruling ideas of the ages in which they were born. In all of them were elements of truth, but from the very nature of the case they were provisional rather than final. They have, every one, after a time proved more or less satisfactory. Some of them certainly do not now belong to what St. Peter calls "the present truth"; that is, the truth suited to present conditions and needs. What, then, are we to do with them? Throw them to the moles and the bats, and give up further attempt to improve upon them? To do that would be to part with our inheritance. Is it urged

that a perfect theory of the Atonement is the despair of theology? That is at once admitted. For no theory can cover all the fulness of meaning that is comprehended in this myriad-sided reality. The facts involved are too transcendent to be grasped by any mortal mind, or included in any single definition. It is a mystery too profound for any plummet line of human reasoning to sound its depths. Any attempt to interpret its meaning can yield only partial results. It is bound to make its appeal to men in different ways. Each thinker will see it from his own particular viewpoint; and he will see it only in part. But since all truth is one, his partial, fragmentary knowledge—which is in harmony with what is unknown—will be to him a treasure for the possession of which all other things may well be counted loss.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the Church has grown indifferent to doctrine in general, and to the doctrine of the Atonement in particular. Its present mood is that of wistful waiting for new light. A leading journal recently remarked: "The religious world is waiting for a Christian interpretation of its great doctrines." This is a true testimony. It is beginning to be felt that the great doctrines have been in the melting pot long enough, and that it is time for them to be recast. The inductive method of Bible study has run its course, and the constructive method is now called for. Glimpses of the larger truth into which the Holy Spirit has been leading the Church have been caught, and these have to be related to each other, and united into one harmonious whole. It is well that the Church

has not been in too great haste to see this work completed; but it will be disastrous if her interest should abate in seeing it begun.

The direction in which the Christian Church in the present day is looking for light on this subject is on its ethical side. There is a manifest desire to get hold of divine problems at the human end. The other side of things may not be ignored or denied, but the weight of interest meanwhile does not lie there. And while the effort to get to the heart of this great mystery will ever continue, yet the present concernment is with the Atonement as a reality and a force in the realm of moral action; or, in other words, as a form of divine self-expression which makes its appeal to the moral nature of man.

There are four tests by which every view of the Atonement must ultimately stand or fall. (1) Does it represent God and man as ethical beings having ethical relations to one another? Or, does it remove God from the sphere of personal relations altogether, reducing the Atonement to an abstraction, and making of it a transaction felt in heaven, without reference to what it accomplishes in the hearts and lives of men? (2) Does it find its verification in Christian experience? This is the supreme test of every spiritual truth. From the bar of Christian consciousness there is no appeal. Every theory of the Atonement that has in it any vital power, has grown out of the experience of Christ as a Saviour. Men have come to Christ and received His salvation, and afterwards they have sought for an explanation of their experience. Their doctrine has been the interpretation of their life. (3) Does it put the

emphasis upon the side of things on which knowledge and certainty lie? The Scotch woman who, when asked "What are the decrees of God?" answered, "He kens that best Himsel'," put in a wise reservation. There are limits alike to divine revelation and human knowledge. There is a region of the unknowable into which it is profitless to pry. Dogmatic modesty is never more becoming than when stating what we know of the upper side of a divine reality. And so, while it would hardly be correct to say that with the question as to how the Atonement affects God, we have nothing whatever to do, our knowledge of such a high matter must needs be slight and wholly inferential; and the practical question after all is, How does the Atonement affect us? In what ways is it related to our human experience and needs? It is to this aspect of the subject that present interest is being chiefly directed. (4) Does it produce satisfactory ethical results? This is the ultimate test of every theory of the Atonement. What place does it give to the moral forces which make for righteousness? "Would it, if accepted," asks Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, "produce piety after the New Testament type?" The validity of this test none will dispute. It is crucial and inclusive. Its force is recognised in every New Testament declaration touching the ethical aim of Christ's sacrifice. In approaching the study of the Atonement we ought therefore unhesitatingly to adopt the fundamental principle of Biblical interpretation that nothing should be accepted as dogma which cannot be turned into practical account in preaching, and in the development of the moral life.

II

THE USE OF TERMS

In popular language the word "Atonement" is used somewhat loosely to denote either the reconciliation of the two parties who are at variance, or the ground of that reconciliation. The word itself occurs only once in the Authorised Version of the New Testament;[1] viz., in Romans v. 11, where it is employed in the former sense.[2] In that solitary instance the Revised Version has substituted for it the term "reconciliation," and with good reason, as it is not the ground or means of reconciliation, but reconciliation itself as an accomplished fact that is expressed in the Greek word. Language is a fluid and not a solid, and in the

[1] The word "Atonement" occurs frequently in the Old Testament where it means literally "a covering." Its use is generally regarded as suggesting that only as the sin of the worshipper was covered by the blood sprinkled upon the altar could he draw near to God with acceptance. There is, however, no evidence whatever that the Levitical sacrifices had for their object the appeasement of God. The worshipper did not cover his sin by his sacrifice, so as to hide it from the eyes of God; contrariwise, he uncovered it by confession, after which it was covered by the mercy of God in view of the sacrifice which was offered.

[2] In Romans ii. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18; 2 Cor. v. 19, the only other instances in which the word *katallage*—which is here rendered atonement—is found in the New Testament, it is correctly rendered reconciliation.

course of time words change their meaning. The word "Atonement," which at the time when the Authorised Version was written was used in a double sense, has gradually come to have the fixed and definite meaning of the ground upon which reconciliation is secured. In this sense it is invariably used in theological discussion. It is not, however, always possible to maintain this distinction sharply in popular speech.

The quality of fluidity which has been ascribed to language belongs to it in its living form. There are words which have become fossilised and dead. In them the thought of the past is embalmed, but they do not represent the actual thought of the present. To use Coleridge's phrase—they do not find us. To this class belong many of the words in which the Atonement of Christ is set forth. At the heart of them there is a core of spiritual truth; but they have become obsolete, except among theologians; and they require to become translated into their modern equivalents to become intelligible to the average modern mind. They were suited to the condition of the people to whom they were originally written, and had a significance to them which they do not possess to us. They have lost their hold upon us because they no longer speak to experience. The mistake has been in regarding them as the measure of truth. They were never designed to be accepted as final forms. They were as much accommodations to existing limitations as the symbolism of Mosaism was to its own age. Moreover, they were employed, as Dr. Farrar remarks, "to describe the Atonement in its effects as regards ourselves; not in

its essence, which surpasses our powers of understanding." [3]

Even Christ had to accommodate Himself to local conditions, and human limitations. He spoke for all ages, but His words were not final dogmatic statements; they were rather the seed-germs from which future harvests were to be developed. The literal meaning of His words is seldom the true one. There is in them a deeper and wider spiritual significance than that which lies on the surface. Apart from their special and primary reference they have a universal quality which makes them a message for to-day, and for every day. Their value lies not in their form, but in their spirit. "The words that I have spoken to you," He says, "are spirit and are life" (John vi. 63). His words are more than words; they are more than sounds that strike the ear, or signs that strike the eye; they are living things which enter into the heart. No teacher could be more indifferent regarding the preservation of the exact form of his words. He did not even take the pains to have them written down by an amanuensis. All that we have is merely a translation of a translation of His words. They have come to us coloured by the individuality of the men who reported them. The treasure of heavenly truth is conveyed in in earthen vessels. But it is no less precious on that account.

Care must be taken not to build a theory of the Atonement upon a figure or illustration. The truth is not to be made identical with the mould into which it is cast; its abiding substance is not to be confounded

[3] "The Atonement in Modern Thought," p. 56.

with its passing forms. The essential thing in it is the spiritual reality which remains unchanged through all its changing shapes. Facts are facts for evermore; but they need new settings, new interpretations, new forms of expression.

No branch of human knowledge can make progress if it anchors to the verbal forms of the past. The current coin of language has to be frequently reminted. The new wine has to be put into new wine-skins. One of the dangers from which the Church should pray to be delivered is idolatry of the letter of Scripture. The letter exists for the spirit, not the spirit for the letter. Literalism is the grave in which spiritual religion is buried. The New Testament is a book which is to be spiritually interpreted. It has no greater enemy than the thorough-going literalist who would fetter its free thought by confining it within obsolete forms. It has no greater friend than the teacher who can give to its time-worn metaphors freshness and power by translating them into the language of the present.

Take, for example, such familiar words as propitiation, justification, sacrifice, and redemption—one of which is of heathen, two of rabbinical origin. What do they mean to the Bible reader of to-day? They were living words when the New Testament was written. The New Testament writers did not originate them, they adopted them; for, like all other writers, they had to make use of the symbolical material which they found lying to their hand. All they give are mere hints and suggestions of a truth which transcends all limitations of human speech—a truth which is unde-

finable as life itself. Those who first used them never dreamed that in them was to be found a complete solution of the mystery of the Atonement. They are merely chinks through which we see a little way into a vast temple of truth, the glories of which lie beyond our most daring imaginings.

Apply to these figurative words a cold literalism and you rob them of their poetic quality, and make them wooden and meaningless. This may be illustrated by the word "redemption." It undoubtedly means, if taken literally, a buying off, or a buying back, as the buying of a captive out of bondage. In Exodus xxi. 30, a ransom is clearly set forth as something paid for deliverance from death. In its religious application the word conveys no suggestion of a ransom price being received by God, or paid by God to others. The sacrifice of Christ was not a literal price given and accepted by which sinful men have obtained release from condemnation. Christ did not buy men with a price in any such sense as that. The whole figure belongs to the language of poetry, and must not be narrowed down to a hard and fast commercial transaction. The wider use of the word is seen in such an expression as "redeeming the time," or "buying up the opportunity." A striking illustration of what is essential in the word is furnished by Victor Hugo where he represents good Bishop Bienvenu protecting a culprit from the clutches of the law, and saying, "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you. I withdraw it from black thoughts, and the spirit of perdi-

tion, and I give it up to God." In some such way as that Christ buys our souls, delivering them from the power of evil, and giving them to God.

Perhaps nowhere do we find the relation of the letter to the spirit in the interpretation of the Scripture doctrine of the Atonement more strikingly illustrated than in the use of the term "blood." This word, which stands as the symbol of life, has been grossly materialised. The Decrees of the Council of Trent declare that "if any one denieth that in the Sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but saith that He is only therein a sign or a figure or virtue, let him be anathema." Protestants while repudiating transubstantiation often fall into the same crass literalism by attributing salvation to the physical blood of Christ which was shed from His veins upon the cross. By this sensuous view of a spiritual truth the teaching of Scripture has been made repellent. We are indeed saved by the blood of Christ, not, however, in some outward magical way, but in something of the same sense in which a country is saved by the blood of its patriots. Blood is the symbol of life. It is because "the life is in the blood" that it maketh atonement. The blood of Christ is the life of Christ; the blood shed is His life given in sacrifice. To say that the world is saved by the blood of Christ is another way of saying that it is saved by the sacrifice of Himself, by the pouring out of His life unto death.

In all the teachings of Scripture regarding the blood of Christ it is its ethical and spiritual value that is kept in view. By His blood, "which," says Ignatius, "is immortal love," we are redeemed, justified and purified. To it redemptive power is ascribed. If we want to know what the blood of Christ does for us we have but to ask what it was that man as a sinner stood in need of having done for him. The two things of which he stood in need were pardon and renewal. These the blood of Christ secures. The two declarations, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin"; "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," bring this clearly out. The sin that is pardoned is cleansed; and it is through its pardon that its cleansing comes. The life given *for* us is given *to* us; it is poured out for us and it is poured into our souls. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and without the drinking of blood we have no life in us.

The same principle of interpretation holds good with regard to every representation of the mystery of the Cross given in the New Testament. The value of every figure employed lies in its ethical content. It is an earthen vessel into which imperishable truth has been poured. It touches ultimate truth even if it does not put it in an ultimate form. It holds the substance of truth even if it has ceased to speak to the modern mind. And to those who succeed in recovering the historical standpoint it has still a message.

While, therefore, we must be careful not to take the formal representation of truth for the very essence of

truth itself, we are not to forget that in the formal representation given in the New Testament we have the original record of the gospel facts, together with their original interpretation. To them we must ever turn as the primal source of knowledge touching the Atonement; and over them we must lovingly linger that we may catch the faintest whisperings of the meaning which they conveyed when they formed part of the living speech of living men.

III

THE ATONEMENT IN OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING

One of the Fathers of the Church has said that "the books of Moses are written with the blood of the Lamb." Between this extreme position, which sees in the Old Testament explicit references to Calvary's sacrifice, and the position that denies even implicit reference to it, there is a golden mean.

All through the Old Testament there is a recognition of the sacrificial principle in religion, and there are veiled references to one who was to come, in whose life and death this principle was to find complete expression. The sacrifices which for fifteen hundred years smoked upon Jewish altars were "shadows of things to come." They were adumbrations, in pictorial form, of a greater sacrifice which lay in the future. Their value was mainly educational.

The Jewish sacrifices were five in number. (1) The burnt offering, or whole burnt offering, which was offered for priest and people alike; all being involved in a common guilt and need. This offering, which was the best of its kind, was entirely consumed; and was accepted for the penitent worshipper "to make atonement for him." (2) The meat offering, which was an appendage to the burnt offering, was unbloody, and eucharistic. It was a sacrifice offered in gratitude to God for his manifold mercies. (3) The peace offer-

ing, which followed the meat offering, and was a sacrificial meal, a festival of joy. It was a feast from the altar, expressive of social concord and friendship, provocative of the altruistic spirit—portions of it being sent to the poor. (4) The sin offering, which was provided for sins of ignorance, and was designed to teach that a man's sins being greater than he is aware of, are to be put away whenever he becomes conscious of them. (5) The trespass offering, which had reference to sins committed against man, as the sin offering had reference to sins against God. When any one was unfaithful to a trust, when he had extorted anything from another by fraudulence and deceit, he had to offer sacrifice, confessing his sin to God, and making restitution to man as far as possible.

It is evident from this brief review that these five sacrifices, which may be reduced to two; namely sin offerings, which were "primarily and essentially confessional," and thank offerings, which were primarily and essentially eucharistic, had at once an ethical significance, and an educational value, or rather they had an educational value because they had an ethical significance. In the order of development the thank offering seems to have come first, the earliest form of sacrifice consisting of gifts offered to the gods—the very word sacrifice itself meaning that which has been devoted to the gods, and is thus made sacred to them.

In the most primitive form of worship, friendly relations existed between the worshipper and his god. His offering consisted of fruits and grains. When the animal sacrifice was added the god was supposed to

feed upon the smoke of the animal as it was being consumed. The shew bread of the Hebrews was a remnant of this offering. Expiatory sacrifices came in among the Jews with the giving of the law, which brought with it the knowledge of sin. When civil crimes became punishable by death, it was a simple step from the idea of blood for blood, in the case of murder, to the offering of an animal which might be accepted for a human life. The essential idea of sacrifice was thus reached, which is a life for a life, the substitution of one life for another. Because "the life is the blood" the sacrifice was atoning; for it signified life offered to God, life given up to Him in voluntary surrender.

But while the principle was right the application which was made of it was deficient. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes it his chief contention that the animal sacrifices of the Jews were utterly inadequate to meet the end in view. They could not cleanse the conscience from sin. "It is not possible," he says, "for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin."

> "But Christ the heavenly Lamb
> Takes all our sins away;
> A sacrifice of richer blood,
> And nobler name than they!"

Furthermore, while with the priest the value of the sacrifices lay in their correct form, with the prophet their value lay in the spirit in which they were offered. The prophets kept insisting that the outward oblations were practically useless when the heart of the worship-

per was not right towards God. Speaking to those whose "hands are full of blood" Jehovah says through the prophet Isaiah, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me; I am full of the burnt offering of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats" (i. 11). To Saul, the self-willed and disobedient king, the prophet Samuel delivered the stinging reproof, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 8). The teaching of the prophets on this point became crystallised into the proverb, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord" (Prov. xv. 8). And on the other hand they clearly taught that the sacrifice of the righteous is his delight.

It is not, however, to the animal sacrifices that we must turn for the highest expression of the sacrificial idea in the Old Testament. Professor George Adam Smith states the matter thus: "The idea of vicarious suffering and substitution of the innocent for the guilty, whereby the guilty are redeemed from their sin, is to be traced not to those animal sacrifices of the Levitical ritual, but rather to the nobler source of human vicariousness and its virtue, as learned by Israel from their own experience and idealised in the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, whose prototypes are Jeremiah and the saving remnant. In such human instances we get the ethical truth of vicariousness; red with the blood of real life. In animal sacrifices the expression of the idea

is largely mechanical." [1] These weighty words find their confirmation in the fact that all the writers of the New Testament, with the exception of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, draw their illustrations almost entirely from the living types presented by the prophets rather than from the sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood.

As we trace the development of the idea of sacrifice from its simplest form of a sacrificial meal, of which the worshipper and his god partook together, to the offering of a gift to curry favour with the god, and on from that to the notion of a propitiatory sacrifice which was designed to appease an angry deity, we soon come to the breaking point. When the consciousness of sin has been awakened the sense of kinship with the god is lost, and all merrymaking in his presence is over. The sin-stricken soul seeks to come into new relations with him. He seeks to gain assurance of his forgiveness on the ground of his penitence; not satisfied with the formal putting away of sin, he seeks personal reconciliation with him. From the sense of personal sin his experience widens out until it includes the sense of corporate or national sin. The feeling of moral solidarity which grows up is voiced in the bitter outcry of Jeremiah, "Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" (Jer. ix. 1). This new sense of sin which is seen in every suffering servant of Jehovah reaches its highest point in the ideal of Israel—The Suffering

[1] "Modern Criticism, and the Preaching of the Old Testament," p. 170.

Servant of Jehovah. His sufferings do not spring from himself. There is nothing in his pure spirit to cause the sorrow of heart which he endures. His relation to Israel is a vicarious one. It is *their* sin which he bears, hence it is *their* suffering which he endures. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5).

This element of personal identification with the guilt and doom of others is not, however, altogether absent from the Levitical system. After the return from the Exile the great high priest comes into view. He was the representative of the people; the one who bore them upon his heart, and who went into the holy place to intercede on their behalf, and to make atonement for their sin. And it is this living representative whom the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes the type of Jesus the high priest of the race, who represents humanity not officially, but as one who had been "made like unto his brethren." He sees the sphere of His activity transferred from earth to heaven. He enters "not into a holy place made with hands like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself now to appear before the face of God for us" (ix. 24).

Religious thought in the present day does not run in the Jewish groove. The altar imagery has lost its force. Men are thinking in biological terms; therefore it is to "the human forerunners of Christ" that we must look for the Old Testament representations of the sacrificial ideas that fit into the thought of the

present. Through her own bitter experiences Israel had been led on step by step to realise the redemptive end in her sufferings. At first her Messianic hope, which was the most vital thing in her history and life, centred in the nation which, after being purified by suffering, was to become the medium of salvation to the world. When hope from that quarter faded out salvation was looked for through the faithful remnant; and when hope from the faithful remnant faded out the Messianic hope was transferred to an ideal person, the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, by whom Israel was to be redeemed and become the joy of the whole earth. When finally hope from that quarter also faded out, the hope itself, which still lived on, was transferred to some one who was yet to come. Never was the Messianic hope stronger than when Christ appeared. "All the people were in expectation" of some great event. The birth-throes of the new age were being felt. That for which the world had waited with longing desire was believed to be at hand. It was confidently expected that the one who was heir to Israel's hopes and ideals was about to be disclosed.

In Jesus Christ all the marks of the Messiah are to be found. He possessed prophetic, priestly, and royal functions. He was an anointed prophet, teaching with authority the things of God; He was an anointed priest, offering Himself upon the altar of the cross as a sacrifice for the world's sin; He was an anointed king, administering through the power of the Spirit the rule of God on the earth. In Him the Jewish doctrine of the Messiahship was not only fulfilled, it was spiritualised and enlarged. The redemption which He achieved

was redemption from sin. The Angel of the Annunciation said of Him, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). Peter announced it to be his mission to "give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31). But His salvation was not only to be national, it was also to be world-wide. John the Baptist discerned this truth, when pointing to Him he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." Gradually his saving work was "removed from its narrow Jewish setting and placed in the centre of the world's history."[2]

The universality of Christ's saving influence is strikingly expressed in the last painting of Doré called "The Vale of Tears." In the background there is a valley bleak and bare, overhung with rocks, typical of our earthly life; in the foreground a representation of our Lord, attractive and winning, expressive of tenderness and helpfulness; over His head an arch of light symbolic of hope; upon His shoulders a cross. His hands are stretched out towards a crowd, which represents all nations and classes. He beckons them to Himself. All faces are turned to Him in wistfulness and desire. He is the bringer of salvation; the fulfiller of human hope. From being one who was sought by an elect nation He has become one whom all the world is seeking; from being the consoler of Israel, He has become the consoler of every troubled and sinful heart; from being the one to whom the finger of Jewish prophecy pointed, He has become the one through whom "the desirable things of all nations" have come.

[2] "The Beginnings of Christianity," by Paul Wernle, Vol. I., p. 24.

IV.

THE PLACE OF THE ATONEMENT IN NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

While the supreme importance of the death of Christ in the minds of the Evangelists is seen in the large place which they give to it in the Gospel story—over one-fourth of the space being devoted to its narration—if we study the teachings of Jesus we are struck with their meagreness of reference to the subject. Hints and suggestions, the meaning of which the disciples evidently did not understand at the time, there are in abundance; but direct and distinct references are but few. Of dogmatic statements in which Jesus seeks to explain the meaning of his death only two are found in the synoptical Gospels; yet in them lie the germs of apostolic theology. One occurs in Matt. xx. 28, and reads, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (See also Mark x. 45.) The other is found in Luke xii. 19-20, and reads, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." The reading given in Matt. xxvi. 28 is, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The genuineness of these passages has been denied by Pfleiderer; other critics of the same school have pared them to the quick, cutting off what they considered to be unwarranted

additions to Christ's original sayings; but there is no good ground for doubting their substantial accuracy.

In the Fourth Gospel Christ is represented as speaking more explicitly of the nature of his death; but there is always the difficulty of knowing where his exact words end and the commentary of John "the theologian" begins. Among the words which bear what Matthew Arnold calls "the certain stamp of Jesus" are the following: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should have eternal life" (iii. 14-15); "God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him" (iii. 17); "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (x. 11); "I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the right to lay it down and I have the right to take it again" (x. 17-18); "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (xii. 32); to which John adds the explanatory note, "This he said signifying by what manner of death he should die." In these references we see that Jesus held Himself to a moral purpose from which He never swerved; that His death was not anticipated martyrdom; that there was no easier, no cheaper way in which His Messianic mission could be accomplished than by the sacrifice of Himself; and that by the sacrifice which He so freely rendered redemption has come to the race.

The reason why Jesus dwelt so little upon His death

was because its meaning could not be understood until after it had happened. It had to be acted before it could be explained. The interpretation of it could be given only after it had become a historical fact. And this is the reason, too, why the Evangelists made so much of it. They saw in it the fulfilment of Christ's redeeming mission. They began to inquire, What does it signify to us and to the world that the Son of man died upon the cross? What has His death accomplished? What difference has it made to a world of sinners that He should have died on their behalf? It was because of the place of prominence given to what Jesus did, rather than to what He said, that led old divines to speak of His "doing and dying" as the sum and substance of the Gospel message.

If we turn to the Acts of the Apostles we find that the resurrection of Christ has at the first a special apologetic value, as the seal of God's acceptance; but in the foreground is placed the truth that the Christ who rose from the dead is the Christ who was crucified; and that repentance and the remission of sin is to be preached in His name because of what He accomplished upon the cross. His resurrection, by declaring Him to be the Son of God in power, set Him forth as a divine Redeemer whose sacrifice was availing, and whose power was mighty to deliver.

In the Epistles of Paul we have the fullest interpretation of the sacrifice of Calvary. Indeed, so deep and abiding is the impression which Paul has made, as the chief interpreter of Christ, that the theology of the Church has been largely Pauline in its cast. The

question has even been raised as to whether Paul has not so mystified the simple teaching of Christ as to bring in what is practically "another Gospel"—an unauthorised addition to the teaching of Christ. Is it not rather to be looked upon as part of that complete revelation of himself which Christ said should be given under the abiding and progressive tuition of the Holy Spirit? Did Christ preach the gospel of the Kingdom? Paul preached the gospel of the King. He dwelt on the exalted character of Christ. He made the acknowledgment of his Lordship his creedal test. (See Rom. x. 9.) He held up the cross as the divinely appointed agency by which the Kingdom of Christ was to be realised on the earth. He gloried in the cross. He gloried in nothing else. He gloried in it for what it was able to do for the individual soul, and for the entire race of man. In the cross the saving power of God was lodged (1 Cor. i. 18). His gospel was "the word of the cross" (2 Cor. v. 21). In his Epistles there is a great paucity of reference to the life of Christ. With the facts of that life he assumed that his readers were familiar. His one overshadowing object was to explain the meaning and bearing of His death, and to show that instead of shattering Messianic hopes, it was the Heaven-appointed means by which these hopes were to be fulfilled. His writings are saturated with the two ideas that in the sacrificial death of Christ we have the ground of salvation, and the source of sanctification. He blends in his thinking the forensic and mystical aspects of Christ's death; relating them to one an-

other; and showing how the contemplation of Christ upon the cross is connected with the identification with Him in the spiritual consciousness as the indwelling life of the soul. In his forensic reasoning he often seems to occupy the position of an apologist who is seeking to construct a bridge by which the Jewish mind could pass over to the interior and spiritual conception of Christianity.

It is difficult to make citations from Paul's Epistles upon this subject, because the doctrine of the Atonement forms the warp and woof of all his teachings. The cross was to him more than a great world-tragedy. It was inseparately connected with the salvation of men. Christ "came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15); and to accomplish His mission He died upon the cross. He was "delivered up for our trespasses" (Rom. vi. 25); He "died for our sins"(1 Cor. xiv. 3); He "died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6); by His death we are "reconciled to God" (Rom. v. 10). The universal sweep of His atoning death is brought out in the statement, "He died for all" (2 Cor. v. 15). Sometimes the blood of Christ is referred to as the symbol of His death. By His blood we are justified (Rom. v. 9); by it we have "the remission of sins" (1 Cor. xiv. 3); by it things in heaven and earth are "reconciled unto Himself" (1 Col. i. 20). The object of Christ's death is clearly stated in the following declarations; "He gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus ii. 13, 14). He died and lived again "that He might be Lord of both the dead and the

living" (Rom. xiv. 9). He "died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 10). To Paul the truth "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20) was the ground of all his hopes as a Christian man; and the wider truth that He gave Himself for all "an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 2), was the sum and substance of his message as a Christian minister.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which a Christian Jew of the first century seeks to correlate the Messiah of history with the Jesus of faith, the Jewish sacrifices are taken as adumbrations of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ is a priest who lays Himself upon the altar of the cross, "putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix. 26). In offering Himself He does not merely "put Himself at God's disposal"; but, as Professor Clarke suggests, He devotes Himself to death that the way of access might be opened to sinners excluded from the congregation of the Lord. When men see in the shed blood of Christ a token of the love that casteth out fear they have boldness to enter into "the Holiest." The essential thing in all the sacrifices offered upon Jewish or heathen altars was that they were the means of approach to God. Harnack calls attention to the fact that "the death of Christ put an end to all blood sacrifices," indicating that Christ in a deeper and more satisfactory manner met man's felt need of a way of approach to God. By His one perfect sacrifice for sin He opened up a new and living way of access to God—a way which

is now open—and open to all. Animal sacrifices had no virtue in themselves, but were signs of penitence and faith on the part of those who offered them. Never were they accepted as substitutes for repentance. They were provided by man himself, whereas the sacrifice by which we are saved is one which God has provided. Man has not to offer an atoning sacrifice; he has to accept as his own the one that has been offered on his behalf. Standing in penitence before the Lamb of God he has to identify himself with Him as his sin-bearer, by whom his sin is taken away.

The writer of this Epistle is careful to point out the limitation of the Levitical sacrifices. There were two offences for which no blood atonement availed; namely, adultery and murder. In guarded, hesitating language he makes the affirmation, "According to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (ix. 22). He is not here stating a universal principle, but is restricting his thought to what obtains "according to the law"; to wit, the ceremonial law. Had he been referring to what obtains according to the gospel he would have struck a different note; for, according to the gospel, he could have absolutely affirmed that all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission. The efficacy of the sacrifice offered on Calvary's cross is without limitation. There is no sin that it cannot cleanse, no sinner whom it cannot save.

With Peter the suffering Christ is exemplary. As

an example he possesses redemptive power. Writing to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion, Peter exhorts them to live as "children of obedience"; "knowing," he says, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver or gold from your vain manner of life, handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). "Christ also suffered for you," he adds, "leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed his cause to Him who judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. ii. 21-23). That they might be prepared to endure unrighteous suffering at the hands of wicked men, he exhorts, "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh arm yourselves with the same mind" (1 Pet. iv. 1). When thinking of the wider reach of Christ's death it is still the ethical side of things that appeals to him. He speaks of Christ as the one "who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. ii. 24); and he declares that He "suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

In the First Epistle of John there are three references to the Atonement. The first of these represents the blood of Jesus Christ as purifying the soul. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ

his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (i. 5). The blood of Christ, which is the medium of sanctification, is the blood as subjectively applied. Those who walk in the light of the gospel become progressively purified, because they continue in a state of faith in which the blood takes practical effect. The other two texts refer to Jesus Christ as a propitiation for sin. "He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (ii. 2). Here the death of Jesus is viewed as a sin offering by which man and God are reconciled. It is unlimited in its extent—its virtue being coextensive with sin's ravages. Not for believers only, but for the whole world without distinction and without exception did the Sinless One give himself as a sin offering. When John calls the self-offering of Christ a propitiation we must be careful to denude that word of its pagan associations. It is sufficient to say that through Christ as the propitiator God's mercy was mediated to sinful men. This thought is emphasised in the remaining text, in which divine love is said to be the source of propitiation. The text runs thus: "not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (iv. 19). Here the propitiation is set forth not as the means of averting God's wrath, but as the crowning act and evidence of His love.

The Book of Revelation, which gives from the standpoint of the impending downfall of the Jewish age, and the inauguration of the Christian age, a flash-light view of the new age of kingly power about to open, discloses at the centre of the new kingdom a

throne, and on the throne a Lamb that has been slain. The Saviour who was dead, and is alive again, is praised by a countless host because He has loved them and washed them from their sins by His blood (i. 5). Those who have come out of the great tribulation are represented as having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (vii. 14). It is the blood not only as poured out, but as applied, that washes the soul from defilement. The new song that rises from the lips of the redeemed is: "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and didst purchase us for God with thy blood" (v. 9). The blood is here the power by which God secures for Himself a people; which is the equivalent of saying that the power by which the kingdom of God is set up on the earth is the blood of the cross. In the new age there is a new kind of sovereignty—the sovereignty of sacrificial love; and by this the world is to be conquered; and God's reign established.

This hasty survey shows:

(1) That among the writers of the New Testament there is no uniformity of method in their presentation of the doctrine of the cross. They display the same variety of treatment that we might expect to find among a similar number of writers to-day. By following the principle of accommodation to circumstances they suggest to us the necessity of interpreting the doctrine of the Atonement in the light of the moral beliefs and experiences of to-day.

(2) That they had no logical system of thought

touching the doctrine of the Atonement. They preached a factual gospel. They dwelt upon the historical facts of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ; but they did not attempt to bound themselves by the limits of any definite interpretation of the facts. They studied them from every point of view in which they spoke to their experience. To them these sublime facts were suggestive of the infinite; they stretched back to the foundation of the world, and forward to the consummation of the purpose of God's redeeming love in the heavenly spheres. Any explanation which accompanied the declaration of the facts was assumed to give the merest hint of the meaning of mysteries too deep for human words.

(3) That in the diversity of forms under which the doctrine of the cross is presented there is an underlying unity of thought. From whatever point of departure the work of exploration is begun, all come out at last on the King's highway. Upon the fundamental truth that salvation comes through the sacrifice of Christ there is absolute agreement. At this central point all interpretations blend into one harmonious whole like the hues of the rainbow.

(4) That with the final passion of Christ the redemption of man is inseparably connected. From this position there is not a single deviation. One great service which Dr. Dale has done for the Christian Church in his work on "The Atonement" is to demonstrate with fulness of citation, and wealth of argument, that this truth is so interwoven into the New Testament writings that it cannot be taken out with-

out pulling the whole fabric to pieces. It is without dispute the heart of the Gospel message, which is in its turn the heart of the New Testament record.

(5) That in their testimony they ultimately rest upon the experience which grew out of their acceptance of the interpretation of the fact of Christ's death as the means of human salvation. Before they began to write down a single word the death of Christ had ceased to be looked upon by them as a sign of failure, and had come to shine with a new glory as the fulfilment of His Messianic mission. They had also come to have personal experience of its power in their salvation. Of their recovered faith and new-born experience their writings are largely the record. Had this faith and experience not sprung into being they would have had nothing to write about. From the same source must our doctrinal statements be drawn. The translation of experience into dogma must be an age-long process. Each succeeding generation must go to the fountain-head of divine truth and grace, filling from that exhaustless source their own content of spiritual need, and then telling others what they have found of Christ's unsearchable riches. Let our theologies be written in this fashion and they will cease to be dry and dead, but will be instinct with life, and full of quickening and saving power.

V

THE PROBLEM INVOLVED

THE problem of problems is sin. It is a problem that is always with us, and with its solution the Atonement has to do. But for sin no Atonement would have been needed.

"Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4). It is a violation of law—a violation of the eternal principle of righteousness which God has established in the universe, and which He has written not only in a book, and on tables of stone, but in the heart of man. It is not only something foreign to the universe and contrary to God's will, it is also something which man himself can never accept; being the negation of the eternal law of love; the wilful compliance—in the face of the protest of the higher nature—with the solicitations of the lower nature.

As a violation of law it is a violation of God's holy will; for God is the fountain of law. "In Him," says Dr. R. W. Dale, "is the law alive." In its last analysis all sin is related to God. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned" is an expression which dips deep into the philosophy of moral action. Take away the idea of God and you take away the possibility of sin. Sin is no abstraction; it is a personal offence committed against a personal being with whom we have love-

relations. As another has said, "It is not so much the transgression of law as disloyalty to the author of law; not so much the breaking of God's law as the breaking of God's heart." [1]

The necessity for the Atonement has been made to rest upon the doctrine of original sin; whereas, it ought to rest upon the fact and experience of present and personal sin. It is related to man as an actual sinner, and thus meets him at the point of his sorest need. Dealing with sin as a present experience it brings a present salvation. It delivers from the wrath to come, by delivering from the sin of the present. Whatever opinion may be held touching the doctrine of original sin there can be no doubt of man's power to originate sin. Within the sphere of moral action he possesses creative power. Sin is his own free act, his own creation. It is not something born in him, but something done by him—something for which he alone is responsible. Upon this point the truth lies with Pelagius, as against Augustine, when he says, "Nothing good, and nothing evil for which we are deemed either laudable or blameworthy is born with us." It is created by us.

One of the tendencies of the present day is towards the weakening of the sense of sin. A profound conviction of sin is hardly any longer felt. The fading out of the feeling of fear in reference to sin may be due in part to the change of centre in Christian thought from divine Sovereignty to divine Father-

[1] "The Recovery and Restatement of the Gospel," Loran D. Osborn, p. 55.

hood. But where sin is feared less it is often hated more; and conviction of sin may merely have shifted its point of pressure. And while on its emotional side there is no longer an overwhelming sense of guilt, the present generation through the influence of scientific teaching is gaining a clearer sense of the opposition of sin to the divine order and of the inevitableness of its punishment. In a way which makes the sternest preaching seem tame the transgressor is represented as ground beneath the wheels of inexorable law. In various directions, however, the tendency to the weakening of the sense of sin is very apparent. The novel literature of the day, reflecting the views of modern sociologists, represents sin as a sort of moral deformity caused by lack of education, bad environment, or a taint in the blood. In the business world its personal quality is lost sight of because of the mutualism of the times. By polite society its repulsive features are discreetly veiled. Theosophy, and kindred pantheistic cults, by denying personality, human and divine, whittle it down to the vanishing point. But it has been left to Christian Science to attempt to obliterate sin altogether; denying its very existence, and consequently denying the need of salvation. "To call sin real and man a sinner needing a Saviour, is an illusion,"[2] declares the high priestess of that philosophically fantastic system. Her startling declaration has the merit of being logical; for it is obvious that if sin be not real, a Saviour is not necessary. And if sin be made a small affair the work of redemption

[2] "Miscellaneous Writings," p. 286.

is cheapened, for as Dr. Owen, the English Puritan, has said: "Whoever has slight views of sin can never have deep views of Christ and His atoning work." [3]

Sin is not to be ignored, nor minimised. It is the most patent fact in life, the darkest experience in the history of the race. It is the root of all the world's tragedies. It is that which makes "conscience a thousand swords," "the torture of an inward hell," "the worm that doth begnaw the soul." Upon the heels of every transgressor follows the Nemesis of retribution. From the avenging furies no evil doer can escape. Lady Macbeth, walking in her sleep after the murder of Duncan, goes through the motion of washing her hands, saying, "Out, damned spot; out, I say!" But the accursed spot will not out at her bidding, and she exclaims, "Here's the smell of blood still; and all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand, oh! oh! oh!" In this sudden awakening of conscience the conviction of sin is experienced in its intensest and most dramatic form.

The irrevocableness of past transgression, as it is generally viewed, and as it is so strongly portrayed by modern scientists, is strikingly expressed in the words of the fatalistic poet-philosopher, Omar Khayyám:

[3] In "The New Theology," by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, the idea of sin is made a mere negation, "the privation of good," instead of what it really is—the actual and wilful opposition of the creature will to the will of God. Mr. Campbell says: "Evil is not a principle at war with good. Good is being and evil is not being." This comes perilously near wiping out all moral distinctions whatsoever.

"The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on; Nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

How different this wail of hopelessness is from the New Testament Evangel we shall see further on.

Professor William James states the case very mildly in his book on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," when he places the irreducible residuum of religion in these two things—"Something wrong about us as we naturally stand, and a sense that we are saved by making connection with the higher powers."[4] "Something wrong about us"? Yes, verily! The something wrong about us is no slight matter. It means something centrally wrong, radically wrong, fatally wrong. It may be likened to the breaking of the mainspring of a watch; the disabling of the engine of a ship; the breaking loose of a planet from its orbit. It is the direst disaster that could have happened.

This sense of something wrong is universal. But it is often dim and hazy. The moral consciousness of man is drowsy and needs to be awakened. Conviction of sin needs to be brought home by the revelation of sin in the light of God's love, as well as in the light of His law. It is deepest after conversion; keenest in the experience of those whose lives are outwardly blameless. There are many who do not prefer sin to righteousness, when they know it to be sin, yet they unwittingly choose the evil part; they approve God's

[4] Page 508.

law after the inward man, yet they do not always follow it. They have the divided consciousness of which Paul speaks when he says, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Instead of extenuating or palliating their fault, they humbly and contritely confess it in words like those of Henry Ware:

"It is not what my hands have done
That weighs my spirit down,
That casts a shadow o'er the sun,
And over earth a frown.
It is not any heinous guilt
Or vice by men abhorred;
For fair the fame that I have built,
A fair fame's just reward,
And men would wonder if they knew
How sad I feel with sins so few.

"Alas! they only see in part
And thus they judge the whole;
They cannot look upon the heart,
They cannot read the soul.
But I survey myself within,
And mournfully I feel
How deep the principle of sin
Its roots may there conceal,
And spread its poison through the frame
Without a deed that man can blame."

The more fully the light enters the soul, the more pungent will be the sense of sin, and the more humble and contrite will be the confession of it.

It is this universal consciousness of sin that the Atonement faces; it is the deep, agonising cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" that

it seeks to answer. It seeks to put everything right in man that has gone wrong; to mend what has been broken; to pacify his conscience by purifying it; to free him from a sense of condemnation, by bringing him into a new sense of relationship to God; it seeks to help a man against himself, by reinforcing his upper nature in its unceasing conflict with his brute nature; to overcome the law of sin in his members against which he is vainly struggling; to extract the poisoned fangs which the great serpent, the principle of evil, has struck into his soul; in a word, it seeks to make him every whit right, both without and within, with respect to sin. The proper point of approach, then, in the study of the Atonement is the recognition of the fact of sin—its enormity, its destructiveness, its universality. To secure salvation from sin is the end of the Atonement.

VI

THE ATONEMENT A THING OF PERSONAL RELATIONS

The Atonement of Christ is set in living, personal relations. It is founded upon the relation of the living God to living men. "The interpretation which construes it in terms of personal relationship and influence," says Dr. George B. Stevens, "is the truest and most satisfactory conception which we are able to form of His (that is of Christ's) mission, life-work, and passion."[1]

The fundamental relation between God and man is not a legal one, but a vital one. The analogies in which it is most fittingly presented are those which are taken from the most intimate human relationships. The reconciliation which it sets forth is the reconciliation of a child to his father, rather than the reconciliation of a subject to his king. Not that sovereignty is necessarily excluded in the consideration of God's relations to man—for a father may also be a sovereign, and a son may be also a subject; but the father is before the king, and fatherhood and not sovereignty is the fundamental relationship of God to men. It is safe, therefore, to say that all theories of the Atonement founded upon the centrality of divine sovereignty rather than upon the centrality of divine fatherhood, if they do not die still-born, are doomed to

[1] "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," p. 532.

vanish away. In every region of theological quest men are saying as never before, "Show us the Father and it will satisfy us."

The most distinctive contribution of Jesus to religious thought was the revelation of God as Father. Before He came the Jews looked upon God as Father in a national sense, while to the rest of the world the term Father, as related to God, was merely a poetical figure of speech. Jesus made the idea of the Fatherhood of God real and vital. His revelation of God as Father precludes the possibility of anything higher or closer. It is, therefore, in the light of this final revelation of God that the Atonement is to be considered. Instead of asking, What does divine Kinghood demand in order to forgiveness and restoration? we are to ask, What does divine Fatherhood demand? Instead of putting in the foreground an offended sovereign who is concerned about the vindication of his justice, and the maintenance of his government, we are to put a heart-broken Father who is concerned about the reconciliation of His child. The mistake of the older theology was that by making kinghood central it made the vindication of law the primary end of the Atonement; whereas, since Fatherhood is central, the primary object of the Atonement is the salvation of man. Governmental relations are not to be ruled out; but they are to be made subordinate. The interests of the child come before the interests of the government. Just in what way the wider interests which lie in the background—the interests of the Father who is also a King, the interests of a sovereignty that is paternal—are concerned, we may

not know, nor do we need to know; the essential thing to understand being, that while by the Atonement the sanctity of law is maintained, its supreme object is to bring God's sinning child to a sense of his wrongdoing that he may fling himself in penitence at His feet.

Perhaps nowhere else in the New Testament is the relation which God sustains to men brought more closely to view than in the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Loving Father—which is the gospel in miniature, a gospel within a gospel. In that parable we find the key to the interpretation of the doctrine of the Atonement. It is true that the parable itself contains no suggestion of Atonement as connected with divine forgiveness. Its object is to illustrate the unchanging love of the Heavenly Father; and, as in all the other parables of our Lord, the drapery is arranged to put the central truth which is taught into the boldest possible relief. It is altogether beyond the scope of this parable to show how divine mercy operates. But although it makes no reference to the Atonement, it portrays in the clearest light the divine propitiousness which it is the province of the Atonement to reveal. Reading between the lines, we catch a vision of the years of agonising waiting which stretched between the son's departure and the act of fatherly forgiveness. The waiting love of the father at length bears its fruit in the son's repentance and return. Yet who will say that the patient waiting of God is the whole truth about God in His relation to man? Elsewhere we learn that He does more than wait. He follows the wanderer into the far country and tenderly calls him back; and

if here man's self-action in coming back is brought prominently into view, it must not be forgotten that behind that is the divine self-action, which exhausts every expedient in the effort to bring him back. It is this omitted truth which the Atonement sets forth; so that while the parable furnishes the key to the interpretation of the doctrine of the Atonement by making fatherhood the source of forgiveness, the doctrine of the Atonement on the other hand is supplemental to the teaching of the parable. What the parable leaves untouched, the Atonement unfolds; the truth which the one holds in solution, the other precipitates into clear and definite form.

The interpretative value of the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Loving Father lies in this, that it reveals God in a human way. Now, it is through the human that we understand the divine, and there is no other way of understanding it. Many a man, when his heart has been wrung with a great living sorrow, has looked up into the face of God and said, "My Father, I know Thee now." His sorrow has been a window through which he saw into the heart of God, and caught his first glimpse of suffering, atoning love. It is this way that God's Fatherhood is ever known.

The original relationship which man sustains to God can never be dissolved. He is God's child. While still a prodigal in rags, the Father says of him, "This my son!" Sin cannot annul his sonship and break the bond which binds him to God any more than the wicked conduct of a son can snap the bond which binds him to his earthly father. He is God's son by

nature. His original place is the Father's house. He becomes a prodigal by his own act of separation and departure; and he is restored to his proper place of sonship when he voluntarily terminates his self-exile and returns to the Father's house.

The saddest thing about man is that he has lost the sense of his divine sonship. The relationship between him and God, if not destroyed, is ruptured, beclouded, or ignored. To restore to man the consciousness of his high lineage, to get him to acknowledge it, and to live up to it, is the end of God's redemptive effort. It is this which the Atonement seeks to effect. Recognition of filial relationship will beget a filial spirit, and when a filial spirit is begotten, God will be served not in the bondage of fear, but in the liberty of love. To every erring child God says, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?" When a wandering child comes to his father, he comes to his own, and when the father finds his long-lost child, he finds his own. The response of man to God is the response of the child to the father. It is the awakening of a slumbering instinct, the regaining of a lost consciousness.

> "Every inmost aspiration
> Is God's angel undefiled,
> And in every 'O my Father,'
> Slumbers deep a 'Here, my child.'"

If the relationship of God to man is that of Father, the relation of Christ to man is that of brother. The Brotherhood of Christ is the basis of his Saviourhood.

The explanation of His effort to bring man back into filial relation with God arises from His intimate relation with him. Separated from man in character He is allied to him by nature and by love. He is his blood-brother; bone of his bone, and soul of his soul. So close is His identification with him that He cannot help mourning over his sin, and suffering for it, bearing the shame of it. Out of His brotherly relation came His priestly mediation. Becoming a sharer in flesh and blood, "it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii.17).

Thus, in the reconciliation of man to God there are three living factors—the Heavenly Father, His erring child, and the divine Son by whom they are brought together. Around these three personalities moves the drama of redemption; and there can be no adequate theory of the Atonement that does not have regard to the essential relations in which these three personalities stand to one another. An adequate theory of the Atonement must make paramount the interest of the Divine Father in His lost child; it must have regard to the right of parental authority and the duty of filial obedience; it must make the play of mediatorial influences which is to lead to the harmonisation of man's relation to God purely moral; and finally, it must present such a revelation of divine suffering love as shall awaken in man a filial spirit, changing him from a rebel to a son; restoring him at once to filial relationship and to filial obedience.

VII

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

The primary fact in Christian experience is the forgiveness of sin. It is by the forgiveness of sin that the something which has gone wrong in man is made right. No man can be right with himself or right with God until his sins have been forgiven.[1]

Forgiveness, like sin, is related to persons. It is God who forgives; it is man who is forgiven. Forgiveness is a divine act. It is something which takes place in the heart and will of God; but it is also something which terminates in man. As sin is the disavowal of divine relationship, the voluntary separation of the soul from God, the shutting of the soul out from the Father's fellowship, the wrenching of the soul from the source of its life and happiness, so forgiveness is the restoring of the soul to its lost relationship, the re-

[1] In popular speech the two terms forgiveness and pardon are interchangeable; but in Scripture usage, while they are not discriminated from one another, their use marks development of thought. The term pardon is an Old Testament word; in the New Testament it does not occur. "To say that God pardons sin is to get our idea from Hebrew and not Christian writings. Pardon gets its meaning from transactions in the administration of human justice, which have too little connection with character to be compared with the divine forgiveness of the sinner." ("The Moral Evolution," Judson Titsworth, p. 58.)

instating of the soul in the divine favour, the bringing back of the soul into the Father's fellowship, the reuniting of the soul to the true source of its life and blessedness. The loss of God's friendship is sin's direst penalty; and this, forgiveness gives back. By the vision of sin as something related to a loving Father's heart, the confession, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight," is called forth. With confession comes forgiveness; with forgiveness given and received, man and his Father are forever at one.

It has been customary to represent the forgiveness of sins as a legal act, implying a criminal on the one hand and a judge or king on the other. This is not the New Testament conception—there Fatherhood is regarded as the source of pardon. In "The Cross and Kingdom," by W. L. Walker—a book otherwise modern in thought and spirit,—there is an unaccountable reversion to the discarded idea of the centrality of the divine Kinghood. Mr. Walker makes kinghood, rather than fatherhood, the source of salvation. The pardon which sinful, rebellious man receives is represented to be "a king's pardon," and the form in which it comes that of the proclamation of a general amnesty. This he holds as being "the new and distinctive thing in the gospel; which is not an announcement of the readiness of God to forgive the penitent, but the proclamation of the drawing nigh of God in a new way of mercy to all men, forgiving their sin, and coming in that remission of their sins to save them."[2] It is sufficient to say in answer to this, that nowhere in the New Testament is forgiveness spoken of as flowing from God's King-

[2] p. 168.

hood, but it is invariably traced to his Fatherhood. "If you forgive men their trespasses," said Jesus, "your heavenly Father will forgive you your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14). He prays for His murderers, "Father forgive them" (Luke xxiii. 34). And He teaches us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses" (Matt. vi. 12). Nor is there "a proclamation of universal forgiveness"; but a proclamation of readiness to forgive on the ground of individual repentance and submission. Every sinning child must come to the Father and deal with Him separately. The divine forgiving love, which is free and full to all, takes effect only when the prodigal child comes home.

But while God's sinning, repenting child is forgiven and restored to His favour, the effects of sin are not wiped out as figures on a slate are wiped out with a sponge. Forgiven sin entails consequences which no tears of penitence or blood of atonement can arrest. The wound that is healed leaves a scar. That forgiveness and suffering spring from the same root, and may fall on the same head, is brought out in the words: "Thou wast a God who forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance upon their inventions" (Psalms xcix. 8). The sufferings that remain after forgiveness are for moral discipline. They are the birth-pangs of a higher life. By the divine alchemy of forgiving love, punishment is changed into chastisement; the forgiven soul being "chastened of the Lord, that he should not be condemned." Thus, although the law of retribution is not altered, the relation of the forgiven soul to it is

altered, so that the fearful end to which sin was leading up is averted, and the forces that were working for ruin now work for restoration.

The vital relation of the Atonement to the forgiveness of sins is clearly taught in the New Testament. That it is declaratory of forgiveness, that it gives an expression of God's forgiving love, no one doubts. To this Peter testifies in his sermon in the Synagogue at Antioch, in the words, "Through this man is made known unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13: 18). But its declaratory character does not exhaust its meaning. Old divines referred to it as "the procuring cause of forgiveness." This is brought out in the exhortation of Paul, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. iv. 32). Again in his letter to the Ephesians, in which he says of Christ, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. i. 7). But those who are agreed on the position that the Atonement is the procuring cause of forgiveness may differ in their views as to how forgiveness comes. Some see in what Christ has done "a something on the ground of which God can righteously forgive"; others, among whom is the present writer, see in what He has done a method of divine action in the securing of forgiveness. Just how the connection is made between the Atonement and forgiveness is the *crux* of the whole question.

Throughout the Christian centuries there has been an unbroken chain of testimony touching the fundamental fact in Christian experience, that through Christ

the forgiveness of sin is secured and mediated. Many have within them, "as something sensible to the heart," the consciousness of guilt removed through Christ. They have tasted the blessedness of the man whose iniquity Christ has lifted up, and whose sin His atoning blood has covered. When sin was casting a dark shadow over their lives, they have looked to Him, and the cloud has scattered, and the sun of divine mercy has shone out. When sin was lying as a heavy burden upon the soul, crushing out its very life, His nail-pierced hand has touched it, and instantly it has rolled away. Let John Bunyan describe this experience. In his quaint and picturesque fashion he says that in a dream he followed Christian till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. "So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell off his back and began to tumble and continued to do so till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, when it fell in, and I saw it no more."

But whether the sense of sin forgiven through Christ —which was with the early Methodists an essential element in conversion—be enjoyed as a distinct experience or not, Christ is still in Christian experience the only ground of the hope of forgiveness. There are many sincere Christians who walk by faith rather than by feeling. They experience no inward revelation or impression, they hear no inspoken voice carrying a message of peace to their sin-burdened hearts; they have no thrill of emotion sealing their faith in God's

forgiveness. They believe in the fact of forgiveness even if they have not the sensible experience of it. They quietly rest in the pledge which God has given in Christ of His forgiving mercy, and in the promise which He has given in His word that upon all who are "in Christ" His forgiveness will be bestowed. And thus in the absence of the inward assurance for which they pine, they fall back upon forgiveness as a subconscious fact, which may at any time emerge into the light of conscious experience.

Because of the way in which it comes, the forgiveness of sin is to God a costly thing. That God has the right to remit the penalty of sin will not be denied; but in order to satisfy his holy nature, He had to suffer vicariously for the sins which He forgave. The sanctity of His holy law would have been destroyed, the interests of His moral government would have been endangered, had sin been forgiven lightly or without conditions. As Dr. Peter T. Forsyth has said, "Every remission imperils the sancity of law, unless He who remits suffers something of the penalty forgiven; and such atoning suffering is essential to the revelation of love which is to remain great, high, and holy."[3] But not only had the seal of divine abhorrence to be put upon it; man himself had to enter into the mind of God regarding it; he had to accept God's judgment against it; he had to have it condemned in himself as it was condemned in Christ. He had to see in the unsounded depths of the suffering of the Holy One of God, who was nailed to the bitter cross for his offences, the awful sinfulness of sin, that from it he might re-

[3] "The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought," p. 88.

coil and flee. He had also to see the greatness of that love which could suffer with and for the sinful; the strength of that righteousness which could not forgive sin without suffering its curse, that he might be brought into an attitude in which he could be personally restored to divine fellowship, and take his place and fulfil his destiny as a son of the living God.

The thought of the Church on the relation of the Atonement to the forgiveness of sins has been clearly stated by Dr. George Adam Smith. Describing the way in which sinful men come into the experience of divine forgiveness, he says: "At the foot of Christ's Cross they have known a conscience of sin, a horror of it, and by consequence a penitence for their own share in it, deeper than anything else has started in human experience. And as thus their whole spiritual nature has been roused, and they wakened to the truth that it would not have been safe, nor in any wise morally well, for them to have been forgiven by mere clemency and without feeling what sin costs, they have come to understand that in His sufferings Christ was their Substitute." [4] It is safe to say that no one who receives a forgiveness ministered by the hand of the Crucified Redeemer can think lightly of sin, or can fail to have some glimmering sense of the tremendous price which his forgiveness has cost.

[4] "The Forgiveness of Sins and other Sermons," p. 112.

VIII

THE BARRIER TO BE REMOVED

THE barrier to be removed in order to forgiveness is on man's side; not on God's. It consists not in God's unwillingness, but in man's unreadiness; not in God's offended justice, but in man's incorrigibility. God's love impels Him to forgive. He is rich in mercy and ready to forgive. Why is His forgiveness ever withheld? Solely because man is not prepared to receive it. The love that gives and the love that forgives is the same, but it is governed by different conditions. The love that gives is love unrestricted; the love that forgives often finds an obstacle in man. When Incarnate Love makes His appeal to the human heart, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me," the bar that shuts Him out is on the inside; and the hand that puts it there must undo it before He can enter in and make the heart his home.

It is universally admitted that forgiveness is never bestowed unconditionally and out of hand. Unconditional forgiveness instead of proving a blessing would in almost every instance prove a curse. It would tend to confirm the sinning soul in disobedience. Man receives forgiveness when he comes into a condition of heart in which it is wise and safe for God to forgive.

To the impenitent, forgiveness can bring no good, to the penitent it can bring nothing but good. The first thing then which God aims to secure in man is a change of heart. "Since He is God," says Prof. Clarke, "nothing needs to be done to Him in order that we may be saved." But on the other hand, since man is what he is, something needs to be done to him in order that he may be saved. Some power must be brought to bear upon him to change his heart, to subdue his enmity, and to induce him to return in his repentance to God. It is because of its effect on man that the Atonement enables God to forgive. It makes forgiveness possible by bringing man into a forgivable condition.

The estrangement existing between God and man, and which is all on man's side, is a thing of degrees. Only in extreme cases does it assume the form of fixed opposition to God. There are few who are consciously and of set purpose rebels against God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The carnal mind is not the natural mind, but the natural mind animalised. Thoreau, when urged to make his peace with God, answered that he was not aware that he had fallen out with God. That was no doubt true. Yet there are many rebels; and there are more who, while they have no settled enmity, have no real friendship and fellowship with God. Robert Louis Stevenson put Matthew Arnold in this class, for when hearing of his sudden death, he remarked to a friend, "I am sorry for Arnold, he will not like God." Evidently he thought that Arnold would not feel at home with God. In this

judgment he may have been mistaken. It is true in many cases. Where there is no outbreaking rebellion there is often a latent estrangement which calls for reconciliation.

A modern novelist tells the story of a man who "cast out with his Maker." He refused to be reconciled to God's ways, and hence to God Himself. By and bye he found that he was misunderstanding Him, that he was rebelling against His Providence because he was misreading it. The man who is hating God is hating Him without a cause; the man who is keeping aloof from God, is failing to see His yearning for his confidence, his love, and his friendship.

But while the attitude of man to God is one of estrangement, the attitude of God to man is one of reconciliation. The burden of the Gospel message is that God is "not imputing unto men their trespasses," He is not throwing them in their teeth, or casting them up against them. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner. There is no enmity in His heart to be overcome. Romanism, as representing the Virgin Mary interposing between a sinful world and her angry Son; and Protestantism, as representing Christ as interposing between a sinful world and an angry God, are both guilty of travesties of the truth. Christ did not placate or appease the Sovereign's wrath; He revealed the Father's love. The object of His sacrifice was not to win God to man, but to win man to God. It is distinctly stated that He "suffered for our sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18). He conducts us into the

presence of God that we may become acquainted with Him and be at peace. There is, therefore, no need to make our peace with God in the sense of getting on His good side, or securing His favor; but only in the sense of accepting His friendship.

It cannot be too often or too strongly asserted that the end of the Atonement is not to remove some hindrance from God, but to break down the barrier that man has erected between himself and God's forgiveness. It is not to reconcile God with himself, but to reconcile man to God. When the anointing comes which enables man to learn the significance of the revelation of God's love in Christ; when he sees Christ identifying Himself with him, suffering on his account, made sin for him; feeling the bitterness of the sins that nailed Him to the tree, and turning from them with loathing, he exclaims:

> "Just as I am—thy love unknown
> Hath broken every barrier down;
> Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
> O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

It is a significant fact that the seventeen representative theologians who, some time ago, took part in a symposium on the Atonement, which has since been republished from "The Christian World," under the title, "The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought," are, with one exception, agreed upon the point that the object of the Atonement was not to dispose or enable God to pardon, but to move man to abhor sin, to desire pardon, and to come into a pardonable condition. The

Atonement is looked upon not as "a judicial drama, but as a form of moral action which has for its object, not the reconciling of God to man, but the reconciling of man to God." It is the divinely provided means of reconciliation. Sinful men are reconciled to God through the death of his Son. With hearts melted to contrition by the vision of a Saviour "wounded for their transgressions," they receive the Father's forgiveness and are restored to the Father's fellowship. The view presented is summed up in the words of Dr. Marcus Dods, "The death of Christ has made forgiveness possible because it enables man to repent with an adequate repentance, and because it magnifies righteousness, and binds men to God." [1]

This view indicates that the point towards which Christian effort is to be devoted in seeking the reconciliation of God and man, is to change man towards God, and not to change God towards man. The preaching of the cross has as its object the breaking down of the only barrier that stands between the erring soul and the Heavenly Father: to wit, the self-erected barrier of impenitence. The instant that barrier is removed, the atoning, forgiving, renewing love of God flows into the heart of man. It indicates also the nature of the influence that is to be employed in order to bring about a reconciliation. It is moral and hence suasive. The ambassador of heaven comes to rebellious men in Christ's name; he stands before them in Christ's stead, he speaks to them on Christ's behalf, beseeching them to give up their attitude of alienation

[1] p. 187.

and be reconciled to God. Their estrangement as a moral state is something they can end; something they ought to end at once, and the object of gospel preaching is to induce them to take God's hand and make things up; accept the pardon which He so freely offers; become one with Him in heart and will; accept His plans for their lives, and live as His loving, obedient children.

IX

THE PRODUCTION OF REPENTANCE

WHATEVER else the Atonement may signify, it is the divinely appointed means of procuring forgiveness by producing repentance. If a definition of it may be attempted, we would say that it is that supreme expression of divine sacrificial love which, working by repentance, brings man into filial fellowship with and obedience to God. It is, in other words, the manifestation, in a sacrificial life and death, of a power sufficient to change the heart of man, to subdue his enmity, to create in him a filial spirit, and to lead him into oneness with the Father's will.

According to this definition, the primary object of the Atonement is to reveal God's suffering love so as to awaken repentance in man. The question is often asked, If God forgives freely and fully in answer to the cry of penitence, wherein lies the need of the Atonement? It lies in this—that by revealing the grace of divine suffering love, "beyond all hope of telling wonderful," it makes repentance not only possible, but actual. The sight of the divine sorrow and pain on account of sin is the great force by which the soul of man is detached from sin and restored to God. The cross is heaven's loudest call to repentance. It is the heart-moving appeal of divine love to estranged and

rebellious man to bow his mutinous spirit before the sceptre of divine authority. For man's repentance God waits and works. It is the only satisfaction that He desires or demands. Until it is supplied, He cannot forgive His erring child. The object for which Christ has ascended is that by the effusion of the Spirit He "might give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins." There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, joy in the heart of God, over every sinner that repenteth. God "willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance." With Jesus, the Kingdom of God was the highest good, and repentance the condition of entering it. To come unto repentance is to come within the circle in which the forgiving love of God operates. When the guilty heart of man is smitten by the cross, and penitence flows forth in confession, the soul is instantly sealed with the sweet assurance of divine forgiveness. "Repent that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19), is the gospel exhortation. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9), is the gospel promise.

By certain modern Christian thinkers, repentance instead of being looked upon as the product of the Atonement, has been regarded as the very thing which constitutes its nature and essence. This view finds its strongest expression in "The Nature of the Atonement," by Dr. John Macleod Campbell—a spiritually suggestive book by which the faith of many has been reinforced. In defining the purpose of the Atone-

ment, Dr. Campbell holds that "that oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession as to its own nature must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man—That response has all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sins of man—a perfect sorrow—a perfect contrition—all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection excepting the personal consciousness of sin;—and by that perfect response to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to divine justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it."[1] This view has been echoed by many modern writers. Henry D. Oxenham, the Roman Catholic theologian, for instance, finds in the suffering of Christ "the supreme agony of meritorious contrition."[2] E. Griffith Jones, in "The Ascent Through Christ," affirms that Christ "offered up a perfect repentance for them [*i. e.*, for human sins], and by his repentance condemned them as our repentance could never have done." But as if that "perfect repentance" were not enough he hastens to say that the cross "has always been the initial motive power that Christianity has exercised on the heart of men, inducing them to repentance and hatred of sin."[3] Without any qualification whatever Eugene Bersier, the French author, declares "Christ

[1] pp. 116, 117.

[2] "The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 304.

[3] pp. 301-302.

has by His sympathy at once with us and the righteous law we have broken, so identified Himself with us as sinners, that He offered up to God a perfect confession and adequate repentance of our sins. This repentance meets all the demands of the law." Dr. R. C. Moberly in his masterly work on "Atonement and Personality," starting from the premise that the idea of "effectual atonement for sin requires at once a perfect penitence and a power for holiness," [4] takes up substantially the position of Dr. Macleod Campbell, that in Christ as the Atoner we have the race repenting. He agrees with Maurice that "the demands of the law can be met only by punishment or repentance"; that, however willing God may be to forgive, He is unable to do so until an adequate repentance has been made. He says that Christ on the cross offered, as man to God, "the sacrifice of supreme penitence; that is, of perfect will-identity with God in condemnation of sin, Himself being so identified with sinners that this could take the form of the offering of Himself for sin.—The perfect sacrifice of penitence in the sinless Christ is the true atoning sacrifice for sin." [5] Recoiling from the consequences of this position, he makes the penitence of Christ the consummation of the sinner's penitence, and puts in the modifying thought that Christ "consummated penitence in Himself, not in the sense that men were not to repent, or that His penitence was a substitute for theirs. He did so not as a substitute, nor even as a delegated representative, but as that inclusive Humanity, of which they were potentially, and were to

[4] p. 110. [5] pp. 129, 130.

learn to become a part. He consummated penitence not that they might be excused from the need of repenting, but that they might learn, in Him, their own true possibility of repentance." [6]

This school of thinkers, despite sundry modifications of statement, all agree in making Christ humanity's representative, humanity's mouthpiece; and in making His representative or vicarious repentance the ground of forgiveness. They are undoubtedly right in the emphasis which they give to repentance, but they are just as certainly wrong in making repentance an element in Christ's atonement. The whole tenor of Scripture teaching shows that the repentance which brings forgiveness is something which the sinner himself is required to render. There cannot be vicarious repentance any more than there can be vicarious sin, or vicarious righteousness. Moral acts cannot be transferred from one moral agent to another. Every moral being must bear his own burden. Christ did not repent vicariously; what He did was to suffer vicariously that repentance might be awakened in man.

In popular preaching, repentance is held forth as the condition of entering the kingdom of God, but it is generally viewed as a self-originating thing with which the sacrifice of Calvary has no connection. The missing link in popular preaching has been supplied by Auguste Sabatier in his posthumous volume on "The Doctrine of the Atonement, and its Historical Evolution." While maintaining that repentance is a moral

[6] "Atonement and Personality," by Dr. R. C. Moberly, pp. 283, 284.

act, personal with the sinner, he shows how it originates. In other words, he shows that the moral design of the Atonement is to lead man to repentance that he may be forgiven.[7] He reasons that "Since the forgiveness of sins can only be obtained by those who have wandered far from God, repenting and turning towards him, Christ's work will consist in bringing about in the individual and in humanity this state of repentance in which alone the forgiveness of the Father can become effective." Speaking of the death of Christ as conquering those whose minds had not been won over by His teaching, he adds, "Thus it is that the passion and death of Christ act upon the hearts of sinners. His was the most powerful call to repentance that humanity ever heard, and also the most operative and fruitful in marvellous results. The cross is the expiation for sins only because it is the cause of repentance to which remission is promised. The more I have considered the matter, the more strongly the following conviction has become anchored within me: in the moral world, and before the God presented to us in the gospel there is no other atonement than that of repentance—that is, the inner drama of the conscience in which man dies to sin and rises again to the life of righteousness."[8] The position of Sabatier is perfectly unassailable. Repentance is the golden key

[7] Sabatier's book did not fall into the hands of the writer of the present volume until his MS. was practically finished. It was no small satisfaction to find in it confirmation of his main positions.

[8] pp. 126-128.

which opens the heart of the sinner to God's forgiving mercy; and inasmuch as it is by the vision of the cross that repentance is awakened, the only way in which any man can keep himself from repenting is by turning his eyes away from the cross, in which God's love for his soul, and anguish for his sin, are so convincingly revealed.

X

THINGS THAT FOLLOW REPENTANCE

Repentance is not the final end to which the Atonement leads. It is merely the first step in the upward way, the gateway into the city of God. The Heavenly Father rejoices over man's repentance because He sees in it the turning-point of his moral career, the beginning of his moral ascent. Ethically considered, repentance is the first round of the ladder of perfection; the birth of the soul into a new life.

Repentance when genuine is followed from the first by a new consciousness of guilt. It clears the eyes of the soul so that a realising sense of sin is obtained, and a holy abhorrence of it is awakened. Beginning with a change of mind, it issues in a change of feeling; producing "a godly sorrow" for sin which causes the slightest transgression to be mourned over as a grievous and bitter thing. But sorrow for sin is not its only fruit. It produces revulsion from sin. The repentant soul turns away from sin with averted face; he flees from it as from a viper. The direction of his life is changed. He has a weeping eye for the past, and a watchful eye for the future. There is begotten within him a new purpose of amendment, which abides and strengthens after his tears are dried. No better definition of repentance has perhaps ever been

given than that of the Shorter Catechism—"Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, and with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience." Upon the tree of repentance the fairest flowers of moral goodness grow.

The power of repentance unto redemption lies in this, that it lodges in the heart a new spirit and principle of action which leads to the building up of the things which have been destoyed. By opening the heart to God's healing and restoring love, which searches its way through every part of the moral nature, it works for moral recuperation. Reversing the order of evolution, it makes the forces which were working for destruction, work for salvation. It changes the waters of the Dead Sea into the waters of life, which flow into the desert places of the soul, making them to blossom as the rose. It quenches within the soul the hell fire of a rebellious spirit, and puts in its place a spirit of loving and loyal submission. It reforms and transforms character, by transmuting divine mercy into human righteousness. It impels to holiness; yea, compels to it. Holiness is contained in repentance as the oak tree is enclosed in the acorn cup. Repentance is potential or seminal righteousness. It is as Sabatier has said, "the beginning of the defeat and destruction of sin"—"the actual realisation of the divine purpose within us." With still deeper insight, he asks, "What is the mystical death (that is, the death of the soul

to sin) save full and perfect repentance?"[1] What is it, we add, save repentance come to its full fruitage?

According to Dr. J. R. Illingworth, the reason why repentance is made the primary condition of salvation is because it "places our entire personality with its triple function of reason, feeling, and will in a right relation to God."[2] It does this by binding the forgiven soul to the Forgiver in bonds of grateful love. There is nothing arbitrary in making repentance the condition of forgiveness. It is made the condition of forgiveness because it ensures reconciliation, and because reconciliation in its turn secures obedience. The production of repentance in order to forgiveness is merely the proximate object of the Atonement, its ultimate object being the reconciliation of the sinner to God in order to the realisation and actualisation of his sonship. When a repentant sinner comes back to God he is touched with a new feeling towards himself; he has a deepened sense of sonship; he passes from natural to spiritual sonship; he takes a son's true place in his Father's house; and strives after a life of perfect filial obedience. Perfected sonship is the goal of true repentance.

Instead, then, of saying that no impenitent soul can be saved, and no penitent soul lost, we ought to say that every impenitent soul is a lost soul, and every penitent soul a saved soul. Salvation is not something that comes after repentance as a consequence of it; it

[1] "The Doctrine of the Atonement and its Historical Evolution," p. 130.

[2] "Christian Character," p. 28.

is something involved in it, and evolved from it. The things that follow repentance are not so far off as to be merely consequences; they follow repentance as the plant follows the seed, the blossom the plant, and the fruit the blossom. The statement of Dr. Dale, "that the remission of sins if it stood alone would leave us unsaved," which he says, "is one of the commonplaces of Christian theology,"[3] is based upon the utterly false assumption that the remission of sin is an external act, consisting in the sending of it away so as not to count it against the sinner; instead of what it really is, a spiritual act consisting of the sending of it away from the sinner himself so that it can no longer be counted against him. Nowhere in the New Testament has remission to do with penalty, but always with sin. "Man," says Prof. B. P. Bowne, "must be saved morally if saved at all." He pertinently adds, "The promised land is only for those who attain unto the spirit of righteousness. The wilful and disobedient may wander in the desert forever; they cannot enter in. The only hope for sinners consists in their being saved from sinning."[4]

In popular speech, repentance and amendment are regarded as one and the same; repentance being looked upon as the first step towards the repairing of the damage which sin has wrought. It seeks without ceasing to unmake the past and to re-make the future. While it is admitted that there are many things which repentance cannot undo, things for which no amends

[3] "The Atonement," p. 336.
[4] "The Atonement," p. 99.

can ever be made, the effort to put things right as far as they can be put right is ever present with the truly repentant soul. When the sense of his ill-desert presses upon him, he cannot be satisfied without sacrifice. He even welcomes pain in the hope that it may have an element of expiation. Two classical instances of this natural and instinctive desire to make atonement for past transgression suggest themselves. The first is that of Thomas Carlyle, standing bareheaded in the rain by the grave of his wife, in the churchyard of Ecclefechan, bemoaning his loss, and seeking by self-inflicted suffering of body and soul to make expiation for the sins of conjugal neglect. The other is the somewhat similar case of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who in his old age stood bareheaded in the market place at the spot where his father's bookstall had stood, doing penance for an act of boyish disobedience. In telling the story, he pathetically remarks, "I hope that the penance was expiatory." These two instances, while revealing the felt need for atonement, show what happens when repentance is towards self rather than towards God. Universal experience testifies that every effort to make an adequate atonement for offences committed has been in vain. All such efforts miss their aim by substituting penance for repentance, and by acting upon the fallacy that man is forgiven *for* his repentance, instead of *by* it. Penance is not repentance. The one, by throwing the sinner back upon himself, genders to despair; the other, by throwing the sinner out upon the infinite mercy of God, genders to hope.

In a pregnant utterance Peter declared before the Jerusalem Council that the result of his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles was that God granted to them "repentance unto life," or as the Twentieth Century New Testament puts it, "the repentance which leads to life" (Acts xi. 18). This expression of Peter's suggests a contrast—the repentance which leads to life having set over against it in our thought, the repentance which leads to death. What is the difference between these two forms of repentance? The one is a "repentance towards God," the other a self-centred repentance which separates the soul from God; the one is born of revelation of God's wounded, suffering love, the other is born of an unrelieved sense of personal guilt; the one is a synonym for remorse, the other is a synonym for sorrow; the one is remedial, the other is destructive; the one holds within it the germ of "the life which is life indeed," the other holds within it the germ of the death which is death indeed.

Repentance is religion in its simplest terms; it is also religion in its deepest terms—for repentance when it is full grown bringeth forth love; and "love is the fulfilling of the law." As a penitent sinner everyone begins the Christian life; as a penitent sinner he passes from one degree of sanctification to another; as a penitent sinner he enters heaven at last. Just in the measure in which the heart is kept soft and tender, by reflecting on God's passion as the source of His forgiving love, it is made plastic to the divine touch, and put in a right condition to have the divine image clearly stamped upon it. Other things being equal, growth in

repentance will mean growth in grace. Growth in repentance is not, however, to be measured by the depth of emotion by which it is accompanied, but by the reformation of character which it produces. The things which follow a growing repentance will be the things which give evidence of a truly regenerated life.

XI

THE DIVINE INITIATIVE

The Atonement of Christ was the natural outgoing of divine essential love. It was a necessity of the divine nature. Sacrifice is the inexorable necessity of love. It is the price which holy love gladly pays for the redemption of the lost. Nothing less than vicarious identification with man in his sorrow, and suffering, and sin could satisfy Infinite love. With sin on the one hand, and Infinite love on the other, the cross was a moral necessity. The measure of God's love was the measure of His sacrifice. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son"—gave what was dearest to Him—in order that man might be redeemed.

The Atonement also met the equally imperative demands of divine justice. God would not have been God had He left man to perish in his alienation. He would not have been just to Himself, He would not have done right by His sinful children if He had not sacrificed Himself for their redemption. The cross reveals Him as "a just God and a Saviour." Christ is set forth to reveal God's righteousness in the remission of sins that are past. His death was an expression not only of God's love, but of His justice. It was not a satisfaction rendered *to* divine justice, but a satisfaction *of* divine justice. It was not an offering to propitiate God, for a Christlike God does not require to be

propitiated; it was the sublime act of self-propitiation. As "the propitiation for our sins," Christ "gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell." His sacrifice was not an offering presented by one person in the Godhead to another for the purpose of appeasement; for in the Godhead there is no schism or warring of attributes; nor was it an offering to propitiate man, for man was the offender and not the one against whom offence was committed. It was rather the self-offering of God. It was as far removed as possible from pagan conceptions of expiatory sacrifice, in which man is represented as offering sacrifice to placate an angry God. It belonged to a totally different category.[1]

In his Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Dr. Wm. Sanday remarks in reference to the words, "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (ii. 25), "Who was propitiated? the only answer can be, God." If he had kept to the line of the Apostle's thought, he would have said, "Who propitiates? the only answer can be, God." Propitiation is here represented by Paul to be an act of God; God is not its object, but its author. It is God who propitiates. If the further question be asked, Whom does he propitiate? the answer must be, Himself. Jesus, "the lamb of God"—the sacrifice of God's providing—is offered up that God might propitiate Himself. Here we touch a new form of sacrifice—

[1] The objection here offered to the use of the word "expiation" is not so much that it is a heathen word, as that it conveys the pagan as distinguished from the Christian idea of sacrifice.

something offered by God to God. This was a form, yea, the highest form, of self-sacrifice.

Further, the propitiation of God was an act of love. Instead of being the cause of love, love was its source. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Christ did not die to soften the heart of the judge, but to lay bare the heart of the Father, that all men might see what there is going on within it so long as they continue in sin. The death of Christ was not the purchase but the proof of His forgiving love. With the warmth of conviction of one who has seen a great light, Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall devotes his entire book on "The Gospel of the Divine Sacrifice" to the elucidation of this single truth. He finds a starting point from which to think his way through the doctrine of the Atonement in the formula, "The Atonement not the cause of God's love, but love the cause of the Atonement—not this, God loves us because Christ died for us; but this, because God loves us, Christ died for us." [2] The position is well taken; for no truth has a more important bearing upon a proper understanding of the entire subject.

Inasmuch as God was first in loving, upon Him fell the burden of reconciliation. The one who loves is always the one by whom reconciliation is desired. Seldom does the one who breaks the bond of friendship take the first step towards reunion. His very sense of guilt keeps him separate and apart. The one who has been sinned against is the one that must take the initiative. While the other is yet a great way off,

[2] p. 14.

he must send to him an ambassage of peace. And here, as Maurice has pointed out, is seen the moral value of the cross, "as setting forth to us the one all-sufficient, all-satisfactory evidence that God hath made peace with us";[3] and also we may add, as bringing us into peace with Himself. In the first of the trilogy of parables in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel: namely, the parable of the lost sheep, the seeking love of God is strikingly brought out. God seeks before He is sought. He comes to those who are not looking for Him. He continues seeking until His effort is rewarded in finding the object of His search. This conception of God seeking man is the distinguishing glory of Christianity. It is utterly absent from the ethnic religions. In them the underlying thought is that of man seeking God. It was left to the Son of man, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, to reveal, as with a sunbeam, the eternally seeking and saving love of God.

That man does not deserve such sacrificial effort on his behalf, goes without the saying. It is to his need and not to his desert that divine love responds. The obligations of divine Creatorship and Fatherhood would have been met with less. In his efforts to save, God goes infinitely beyond the claims which man has upon Him. He does "exceeding abundantly" above all that man could rightfully ask. If it is true that there is hardly any length to which the highest human love will not go to compass its end, who will set limits to the outreach of God's redemptive effort? Of His interest there can be no letting down, of His effort to

[3] "The Doctrine of Sacrifice," p. 152.

restore there can be no letting up. After every erring child He must forever go, calling him back, and suffering *with* him and *for* him until he returns.

Is the question raised, How can God suffer? Rather should we ask "How can God love and not suffer?" Says Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, "Theology has no falser idea than that of the impassibility of God. If He is capable of sorrow, He is capable of suffering, and were He without the capacity of either, He would be without any feeling of the evil of sin or the misery of man. The very truth that came by Jesus Christ may be said to be summed up in the passibility of God."[4] As a Father He cares what His children do, and is pleasantly or painfully affected by their conduct. His heart bleeds for them when they do wrong and suffer for it. And it is because of His suffering love that He has come out of Himself in the process of historic redemption, to win man back. Nor will He see of the travail of His heart and be satisfied until man's redemption has been achieved.

[4] "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," p. 483.

XII

ADJUSTMENT

The work of Christ is to bring men into adjustment with God, and the method by which this is done is designated justification. To justify is to put right, to bring into adjustment. It is to establish in man a new centre of moral equilibrium. "Being justified" —adjusted—"by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The adjustment is something which is inwardly received. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the at-one-ment," or the adjustment. By Christ inward harmony is restored, by Him sin is forgiven, and man is reconciled to God. This personal adjustment is thus something which comes within the range of experience. It includes not only the bringing of man into right relation with God, but also the bringing of him into right relation with himself. This is done by the pacifying of his conscience, and by the expulsion of every disturbing element from his soul. This adjustment includes also the bringing of man into right relation with the providence of God, so that his wishes harmonise with God's appointments, and his life, freed from friction, becomes a part of the divine order in the world. It includes still further, the adjusting of man to his social surroundings, for when

Christ comes into life social jarrings and discords are harmonised. He made of Jew and Gentile one new man, so making peace, and He is able to weld into one all sorts and conditions of men, making of them a new mankind.

Paul, following the course of Hebrew thought which looks upon righteousness as designating "not so much a moral quality, as a legal status," [1] uses the term justification in a forensic sense. With him justification is a legal process. But at the heart of his doctrine of judicial justification there is an ethical centre. "His language is legal, but his thought is ethical." There is a point in his teaching at which justification, or "the making out to be righteous," and justifaction, or "the making righteous," blend into one. The man who is made out to be righteous is a man who is being made righteous; the man who has his relationship with God restored is a man whose disturbed moral balance is being adjusted. Wernle contends that Paul attached to justification a new meaning, taking from it its sharp antithesis between condemnation and acquittal, and giving to it the simple meaning of forgiveness. He says "all that is left are the juridical terms and the forensic appearance. 'I am justified,' no longer means, now I have acted rightly in the sight of God, but I have received forgiveness, and am assured of his grace." [2] It is enough to answer that to be justified never meant to act rightly, but to be set right; and forgiveness is

[1] "The Prophets of Israel," Professor W. Robertson Smith, p. 72.

[2] "The Beginnings of Christianity," p. 304.

included in justification because it is the means by which man is set right with God. It is not necessary thus to pare down the meaning of Paul's terms in order to make them harmonise with other parts of his teaching. That he did not use these terms in the bald legalistic sense which has been ascribed to them is evident from the fact that he connects the judicial release of the sinner from condemnation with an act of grace in which terms of law are transcended. We are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It was doubtless necessary for apologetic purposes to present the doctrine of salvation to the Jewish mind in its forensic aspect, but he always made haste to find in that presentation a point upon which to rest the fulcrum of moral motive by which the soul was to be lifted up into the higher life of free and joyous sonship. He is also careful to defend the doctrine of justification by faith on ethical grounds, by showing that moral rectification was necessarily involved in the outward act of justification. Justification is therefore in Paul's scheme of thought no legal fiction. The justified soul is not made out to be righteous on the ground of the righteousness of another. He is declared righteous because he is already incipiently, germinally righteous; the seed of a new life has been planted within him. An organising life centre has been established within him which will in time reduce every discordant element to harmony.

Justification has both juridical and ethical relations. It is something which takes place within the court of

heaven, and it is also something which takes place within the soul. It is "God who justifies," and it is man who is justified. When Paul says to his Corinthian converts, "Ye were justified," he evidently means that they were both outwardly and inwardly rightened or adjusted. They were put right with God because they had been made right in themselves. Not only were they put right with respect to law, in the sense of being freed by forgiveness from its condemnation, but also in the sense of being brought into a state of obedience to its demands; and were also put right in the whole circle of their relationships—Godward and manward, heavenward and earthward. In a word, they were spiritually rectified. This is undoubtedly the core of Paul's thought. The mould in which it is cast may be forensic, but the essential thing is not the form of the figure, but the ethical idea that lies at the heart of it. Every thinker has to use the symbolism of his age; and make adjustments to linguistic limitations. If Paul had lived in our day he would have made use of a very different class of metaphors from those which he has employed. In the interpretation of Scripture symbolism it is important to distinguish between the abiding substance of truth and its changing forms, the main thing being to get through the form to the spirit, through the verbal enswathement to the living reality. The words of Scripture are to be interpreted literally so as to get the standpoint of the author; they are also to be interpreted normally so as to get at the essential truth which they contain. They hold within them germs

of truth, which, like all living things, are bound to undergo frequent transformation.

Dr. R. A. Torrey, the evangelist, who is probably building better than he knows, is adapting the old doctrine of justification by faith to modern conditions of thought. In his meetings all over the world he has made extensive use of cards upon which are printed the words, "Get right with God." These cards, which have been circulated by the tens of thousands, have been the means of awaking conviction in many a heart. They derive their power from the fact that they contain the truth which lies at the centre of the doctrine of justification by faith, a truth which in its Pauline form has become obsolete. The man in the street can understand something of what is meant by "getting right with God."

An interesting use of the word "justify" is found in connection with typesetting. A compositor is said to justify a line or column of type when he spaces it properly, so as to bring it into alignment. In this use of the word there is a suggestion of its true ethical import. To justify is to adjust; it is to bring man into proper alignment to all his inner and outer relations.

In the Elizabethan period of English literature religious writers made use of the word "attunement" as a synonym for atonement. After a time the word dropped out of use, much to the impoverishment of religious nomenclature; for the idea expressed by it was not only fundamentally correct, but the word itself appealed to the imagination in a powerful way,

and was suggestive of wide and practical application. Fortunately one of the latest discoveries of modern science affords us the opportunity of recovering the word. In wireless telegraphy, as perfected by Marconi, one of the most important features is the tuning of each receiver to its own transmitter, so that it will respond to it alone. This tuning of the receiver and transmitter is determined by the pitch of frequency with which certain electric waves pass through ether. If, for instance, the transmitter radiates 500,000 vibrations a second, the receiver must be tuned to take messages at 500,000 vibrations. According to the same principle, a tuning fork will respond only to another tuning fork having exactly the same number of vibrations per second. This arrangement of tuning is necessary in order to secure secrecy in the transmission of messages by wireless telegraphy. Suppose a message is sent from America to a receiving station in England; the transmitter sets in motion electrical waves which, passing through the ether, cross the ocean and strike the wire suspended from the mast at the receiving station, and register themselves upon the receiving apparatus. But should there be ten thousand receivers along the English coast, the message will be received only by the one which is tuned to the transmitter.

So when God and man are attuned, correspondence is opened up between them. The soul that is attuned to God hears messages that others hear not. To him are given the sacred intimacies of a divine friendship. The softest vibrations of the divine voice awaken

within him a glad response, and his answer to its faintest whisperings is, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Of all inward harmonies Christ's love is the keynote. When it enters the heart it puts an end to all strife and bitterness. It "attunes to order the chaotic din" that reigns within the soul. It takes out of human life the discordant note of selfishness, and by awakening love restores man to his lost place in the celestial harmonies. The man that is thus attuned to all his Godward, selfward, and manward relations is well described by Longfellow as one

> "Who through long hours of labour,
> And nights devoid of ease,
> Still hears in his soul the music
> Of wonderful melodies."

This new and profoundly suggestive illustration of the method of divine communication has in it a suggestion of the universality of God's operations of grace. God is at the centre of things; the vibrations of His voice fill the world. There is not a soul anywhere which the vibrations of His voice do not reach. But, alas, many are unresponsive; they are not putting themselves in the attitude in which God can open up communication with them. "He that is of the truth," says Jesus, "heareth my voice." There is something in every honest heart that responds to the truth. The reason why the voice of God fails to find an echo in some hearts is because they are not true. The true

soul, the sincere soul, is the soul that is in tune with God and hears His message when it comes.

To secure the moral adjustment or attunement of men was the mission of Christ, and hence the end of His Atonement. We are justified freely by God's grace "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." When Mr. Chamberlain visited Potchefstroom in South Africa in the capacity of British Colonial Secretary, a large concourse of Kaffirs assembled to meet him. They stood under an arch bearing the words "Welcome, Moathlode," meaning, "Welcome to the man who puts all things straight." There was something pathetic in the hope expressed in these words, for it was little that Mr. Chamberlain was able to do in the way of putting things straight in that distracted country. But this is what Christ has undertaken to do for the world; this is what He came into the world to do, and this is what He is now doing. By the power of "the blood of his cross" He is making crooked things straight; He is adjusting all things on earth to the divine order from which they have fallen; He is taking all discord out of life; He is overcoming all that opposes the purpose of creation; and is slowly but surely bringing the whole round world into oneness with the will of God.

XIII

ONENESS OF CHRIST WITH MAN

The relation of Christ to humanity is organic and vital. The Son of man is the vine of which the sons of men are the branches. He who in His lower nature was a tender shoot from the root of David, is in His higher nature the root from which the entire tree of humanity springs—the root from which flows the all-pervading life by which every leaf and twig upon the tree of humanity is nourished.

In this original, generic relationship subsisting between Christ and man community of nature is implied; for as there is nothing in the branch which is not first of all in the root, there is nothing in the true, essential life of humanity which does not come from Christ. When in the fulness of time Christ entered our world through the lowly gateway of birth, He did not come for the purpose of establishing a new relationship, but for the purpose of making known a relationship which is "from everlasting to everlasting." Closer than any bond of union underlying the most sacred of life's relationships is the bond of union that has always existed between Christ and man. His oneness with man is essential, vital, eternal. He is "the Son of man," in whom the whole human family is united and represented; the Elder Brother of human-

ity; the nearest of kin to the race; the friend and Saviour of every sinning, suffering soul.

Standing in organic and vital relation with universal man as the original Root of the race, it was natural that through Him redemption should come to humanity. It behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren that He might be able to befriend them in the dire extremity of need into which they had been brought by sin. His oneness of relationship with them explains the mystery of His incarnation. Uniting Himself with humanity, identifying Himself with human interests, incorporating Himself into the common life of the world, whatever virtue there is in His life, whatever result is accomplished by His mission to earth become the common inheritance of the race. His sacrifice is not an individual act. Contrariwise, it is "a racial act" (Professor A. S. Peake); it is "world process" (R. J. Campbell); it is "a universal act" (J. S. Lidgett). All men have a common interest in it, because they are bound to Him by a common tie of relationship. No age, no church, no favoured class of elect souls can claim a monopoly of Christ, or of His salvation. As the sun is everybody's sun, Christ is everybody's Christ. He is "the Saviour of all men." By Him the whole world has been put upon a new footing before God; every sin-condemned soul has been brought into a salvable condition; the redeeming energies of the Godhead have been set loose, and brought to bear upon every heart and life; power has been given by which fallen men may rise; an antidote

for the evils from which it suffers has been placed in the heart of the world's life. The fulness and sufficiency of grace treasured up in Him are for every member of the fallen race of man. The system of divine grace which has Him for its centre has the whole round world for its circumference; "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

There are few more exciting chapters in church history than that which records the discussions waged on the subject of the extent of the Atonement. Doughty champions of the faith broke many a lance over such questions as whether Christ died for all men without distinction and without exception; or whether His death had a double reference, one of mercy and hope for the elect, and one of judgment and doom for the non-elect. If the question of the extent of the Atonement is no longer discussed it is because its universality has been seen to be so clearly implied in the universal relation of Christ to men that it no longer admits of dispute. We are coming to find the supreme evidence that God will have all men to be saved where Paul found it, in the unity of God. "There is one God," hence one purpose of grace for all; "one Mediator also between God and man" (1Tim. ii. 5), who sustains the same relations to all; one central fountain of life whose healing streams flow to all, flowing to some in open sight, reaching others by a secret, underground channel. We are coming to recognise the uni-

versality of Christ's redemptive influence by finding in every stirring of the heart to better things the throb of His universal life.

As the root of humanity, as the centre of a moral solidarity, as the spiritual head of the race in whom all things are summed up, He stands in such close identification with men as to make it possible for Him to accomplish their redemption. Because of His essential oneness with them He could bear their sin, and they could receive His righteousness; because of His essential oneness with them it could be said, "if one died for all then all died," the death of the one standing in some valid sense for the death of all. His identification with the race is moral. It is the identification of the sinless with the sinful. While separate from sinners in the sense of having no partnership with them in their sin, He was closely joined to them in the suffering which it brought. In some comprehensive sense His sufferings were the sufferings of the race. They were not arbitrarily inflicted, but came as the natural and inevitable result of the relation in which He stood with a race that had sinned. He did not suffer merely through association with the unholy; He suffered for men in a peculiar sense as one who voluntarily came into union with them for the purpose of securing their salvation. There was no sorrow like unto His sorrow, for His was the sorrow of a divine compassion which gathered into itself the world's sin, suffering for it as if it had been His own. "He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

In that essential and eternal relationship which lies at the foundation of all that Christ has undertaken and accomplished in the work of human redemption D. W. Forrest, in "The Christ of History and Experience," finds the basis for the representative view of the Atonement which he advocates. While admitting that no external category can ever express all that is involved in the redemption of moral beings, he holds that the word which best describes the whole scope of Christ's work is not substitution but "representation." [1] His position is defined in the statement that Christ is "our personal representative before the Father" and that "in him God is revealed, not as separate from men, but as one with them." "His divine nature enabled Him to identify himself with men in their sinful state, so that in a very real sense He could act for them, suffer for them; win for them the right to become sons of God." [2] Dr. Forrest here touches the fundamental principle in the Atonement; although unhappily he hesitates to carry it to its legitimate conclusion.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the redemptive value of the Atonement lies in the relation which Christ sustains to the human race into which He chose to be born, and an integral part of which He became. It is as man's representative that He is man's Saviour. He has come into the heart of the world's life, becoming subject not only to its limitations, but also to its liabilities. He has saved the world from moral bankruptcy by putting into it the unsearchable riches of His life. In a true and valid sense all that He did upon the cross He did for the humanity of

[1] p. 248. [2] p. 127.

which He was part—His death being in an important sense an event in the common life of the race.

The humanity that has Christ in it is potentially a saved humanity. Nothing can ever separate it from the benefits of Christ's redemption. It stands before God as something with which Christ has identified Himself. God looks upon humanity in Christ; He sees the Head suffering for the members; He sees the Brother standing in the place of His brethren; and He deals with humanity as related to Christ and as represented in Him. Because of the perfect identification of Christ with a sinful world, in His sacrificial death, God comes to men not in condemnation but in mercy. He looks upon men in the face of His anointed. He sees the race as it is in its oneness with Christ as its Redeemer.

XIV

ATTEMPTED EXPLANATIONS

The first attempt to explain the sacrificial work of Christ seems to have been made by Irenæus, who advanced the singular theory that the ransom of Christ was paid to the devil for the liberation of human souls held by him in bondage. This crude and grotesque conception, around which the coarse fancy of the mediæval theologians delighted to play, was in harmony with the juristic spirit of the times, and held sway for a long period.

In the twelfth century Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, shifted the point of view, giving definite expression to the thought of the value of Christ's sacrifice—a thought which had been slowly forming in the mind of the Church. In his epoch-making book, "Cur Deus Homo," he sets forth what has been known as the Penal or Satisfaction theory of the Atonement. It is in substance this: man owes a perfect obedience to the divine law, and having failed to render it he is doomed to eternal punishment, inasmuch as his finite sin is committed against an infinite God. Through the infinite merit of Christ a perfect satisfaction has been made, His suffering being an equivalent for the punishment of man; He having endured the pains of hell, not extensively but intensively, and God's justice being satisfied, His mercy is allowed to

operate. According to this view the Atonement is a "thing of geometrical quantities." It was an easy step from this theory to the doctrine of supererogation, developed by Thomas Aquinas. He reasoned that since Christ did more than enough to balance sin's debt, the accumulated surplus of merit "might be transferred from one sinner to another by a bill of exchange endorsed by the Church." [1]

In a rebound from this purely legalistic view Abelard was led to adopt what has been called the Moral Influence theory; which is to the effect that Christ died for the twofold purpose of subduing rebellion and removing the guilty fears of man by the transcendent exhibition of the divine love.

A theory which stands midway between the Penal theory of Anselm and the Moral Influence theory of Abelard was propounded by Grotius in the seventeenth century. It is known as the Governmental theory. According to this view Christ's death was not a satisfaction of the justice of God, but such an exhibition of His determination that sin shall not go unpunished as the benevolence of God requires as a precondition of forgiveness. Grotius held that God as the Moral Governor has the right to relax the demands of the law at will, and that the Atonement of Christ was a governmental expedient rendering such an exercise of His prerogative wise and safe.

Under these three leading theories of the Atonement all the varieties of views that have ever been held

[1] "The Doctrine of the Atonement and its Historical Evolution," by Auguste Sabatier, p. 12.

may be grouped; albeit, there are few who would accept any one of them in its entirety and carry it to its logical conclusions. This is one of the cases in which, as some one has put it, a *label* may be a *libel.* In all of these theories there is a measure of truth; but no one of them contains the whole truth. They err either by way of excess or by way of defect.

Turning to the first named of these three leading theories we have to admit that there is undoubtedly in it an element of truth; but when the death of Christ is made a literal substitution of the sufferings of the innocent for the sins of the guilty, when it is made a legal *quid pro quo,* a precious truth is pushed to such an extreme as to become a positive error. Christ had "no sense of guilt in His sufferings, consequently He cannot have regarded them as punishment." [2] He did not suffer an infliction of vindicatory justice as the theologies founded upon the false assumption of dualism in the Godhead have represented. To say that He endured the penalty of sin; that He rendered an equivalent for the sins of all mankind; that He met all the legal requirements of the law which man had broken; or that He paid to the uttermost farthing the debt of moral obligation which man has entailed, is to exclude the very possibility of forgiveness. If the sacrifice of Christ was "a quantitative equivalent," if it was a commercial transaction involving so much suffering for so much sin, salvation is not a thing of grace but of debt. Furthermore, the logical terminus of such a theory is universal salvation, for if Christ bore the

[2] "Justification and Reconciliation," Albrecht Ritschl, p. 479.

sin of all men in the sense that He satisfied the justice of God on their behalf, then all must be saved.

But Christ took the sinner's place in no such literal sense as that. In Him the race did not "suffer and render satisfaction for its guilt," as Dorner states the satisfaction theory;[3] for, as Vinet has said, "the transfer of guilt upon the innocent is absolutely contradicted by our idea of morality."[4] The filament of truth which runs through this theory is that in some real way Christ identified Himself with human sin in order to its removal; that His suffering was the suffering of the sinless for the sinful, that His death, while not a literal substitution, had in it a substitutionary element. Beyond this general principle we cannot safely go.

The Moral Influence theory leaps at a single bound to the final result of the Atonement; but its inadequacy from an interpretative point of view has been generally felt. Its great merit of shifting the reason for the Atonement from God to man is counterbalanced by reducing the cross to a dramatic exhibition, instead of making it the cost of salvation. Dr. Horace Bushnell, its most famous exponent, in his volume entitled "Vicarious Sacrifice" represents Christ as "suffering with us through sympathy and fellowship; the result of which was to give Him a moral power over men"; but in his later work on "Forgiveness and Law" he materially modifies if he does not entirely abandon that position. The thing for which he sought in vain was the missing link which was needed to connect the forgiveness of sin with the sacri-

[3] "System of Christian Doctrine," Vol. II., p. 117.

[4] "Letters," Vol. II., p. 25.

ficial death of Christ. It is worthy of note that Bushnell himself does not use the expression "moral influence." What he claims for the Atonement is that it possesses "moral power"; that it is not so much a method of divine persuasion as it is a method of imparting life. Maurice in his "Theological Essays" gives emphasis to the revelatory or didactic significance of the Atonement, and defines the object of Christ's death to be "to illustrate the principle of self-sacrifice as due from all intelligent creatures to Him who made them." Professor William N. Clarke in "An Outline of Christian Theology" takes the same ground, declaring that "Christ has revealed the infinite redeeming love of the Holy God, and has thus opened the way for us to believe in God our Saviour, and be saved by His grace. "The moral view of the work of Christ," as it is called, receives unqualified support from Dr. George B. Stevens in his recent work entitled "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation." To some form of this view modern thought very decidedly inclines. The main thing lacking in it is that it does not show how the work of Christ is so related to sin as to be made effective to salvation; nor does it tap the deep fountain of motive from which the moral influence of the Saviour's death springs. It predicates an effect without an adequate cause. Moreover, the comparison suggested between this view and others is invidious. No view of the Atonement was ever propounded that was not believed by its advocates to possess moral influence; nor has any view failed to support its claim by pointing to the renewed lives of

those who accepted it. There is certainly urgent need for a new classification of terms.

The Governmental view has been of inestimable service in emphasising the important truth of the relation of the Atonement to the moral universe, and in attempting to show how the divine government is upheld while mercy is exercised; but it has frequently been stated so as to represent God's relation to man as official rather than as personal. In this extreme form it has made the Atonement appear to be a plan or scheme for mercy to defeat justice rather than a vital process of salvation; an expedient to relieve the divine government from a deadlock rather than an operative spiritual principle; "a witty invention" to meet a governmental necessity rather than a natural method of meeting a spiritual end. But to characterise this view in a sweeping way as mechanical rather than vital is manifestly unfair. Those who have accepted it have certainly looked upon it as "vitally practical." It has been claimed for it that by showing that the Atonement of Christ expresses God's holy character, His hatred of sin, His guardianship of law, and His regard for the interests of His whole creation, while exercising His pardoning prerogative, it makes the gospel morally effective. Its main defect is that it rests upon the idea of divine sovereignty, and pushes into the background the idea of divine Fatherhood; and any theory that does that is defective on the face of it, and cannot win permanent acceptance.

One of the most notable attempts in recent years to sound the depths of the Atonement has been made by

Dr. R. W. Dale. His point of approach to the study of the subject is that the sin of man having disturbed the moral order of the universe, the mission of Christ was to set things right in relation to law. He reasons in this fashion—God's relation to law is one of "identity," therefore when law is violated He must "assert the principle that all sin deserves punishment by punishment, or in some other way." "The Atonement of Christ is the fulfilment of that necessity." [5] Christ standing in essential relation alike to the law and to the law-breaker mediates between them. The penalty of violated law, which He as the law's representative might justly inflict upon man, He as man's representative voluntarily endures in Himself; and thus the law is satisfied and man delivered. This according to Dale is the heart of the whole problem. He represents Christ so identifying Himself with our race as to assume our nature, and "endure suffering instead of inflicting it upon us." He endures "the actual penalty of sin." His death is "the objective ground on which the sins of men are remitted," because it was an act of submission to the righteous authority of the law by which the human race was condemned—a submission by one from whom on various grounds the act of submission derived transcendent moral significance; and because of the consequence of the relation between him and us—his life being our own—his submission is the expression of ours and carries ours with it." [6] Sometimes he pushes the idea of Christ's moral identification with man

[5] "The Atonement," pp. 391, 392. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 430.

to an extreme by insisting that "our submission is included in the submission of Christ," so that His act is ours; but he regains his ethical balance by insisting that Christ also by His Atonement secures our submission to God; thus restoring us to the original and ideal relation to God which sin had dissolved.

The two fatal defects in Dale's position are that it represents man as standing in relation to the divine law rather than in direct and personal relation to God himself; and that it represents the God who is kept in the background as an august Potentate rather than as a loving and merciful Father. Christ is said to have taken "the law's place," rather than man's place. The ransom which He paid was "not to God but to the law of eternal righteousness outside of God." Dale had too much of the modern spirit to ignore altogether the relation of the fatherhood of God to the Atonement; or to fail to connect the God of law with the God of love; but he made divine fatherhood subordinate in his scheme of thought, and he allowed himself to be fettered by his adherence to his original error that it was with some abstract thing called His law, rather than with a living entity called His child, that God was primarily concerned. His mind was more taken up with God's broken law than with His broken heart. He looked upon man's repentance as coming from a sense of violated law rather than from a sense of wounded love, and as a consequence weakened the power of the Gospel's appeal.

In his work on "The Death of Christ," Dr. James Denney attempts to rehabilitate the strictly substitution-

ary view of the Atonement. He states his position as follows: "It is Christ set forth in His blood who is the propitiation; that is, it is Christ who died. In dying, as Paul conceived it, He made our sin His own; He took it upon Himself, as the reality which it is in God's sight, and to God's law; He became sin, became a curse for us. It is this which gives His death propitiatory character and power; in other words, which makes it possible for God to be at once righteous and a God who accepts as righteous those who believe in Jesus."[7] Still more explicitly he says, "God has really done something in Christ on which the salvation of the world depends."[8] That something he explains to be that "Christ took on Him the consequence of our sin, He made our responsibilities, as He found them, His own."[9] This thought he pushes to the utmost limit, and declares that Christ "removes the responsibility of sin from us because He takes it upon himself."[10] Now, whatever the death of Christ does for us, it certainly does not remove from us the responsibility of sin. Contrariwise, it heightens and deepens the sense of personal responsibility for sin. In "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," which is intended as a supplement to his book on "The Death of Christ," Dr. Denney expresses astonishment that he should have been charged with teaching "a forensic, or legal, or judicial doctrine of the Atonement"; but despite his protest it is difficult to see how any other construction can be put upon his words. His conception of the relation existing between God and man is essentially

[7] p. 176. [8] p. 110. [9] p. 98. [10] p. 230.

legal and external. Of the conception of divine Fatherhood in relation to the Atonement his writings afford scarcely a trace. It is suggested that he is too Pauline in his cast of thought; rather would we say with Professor Peake that he is "not Pauline enough." He gives the forensic husk of Paulism without its mystical kernel.

The fundamental principle upon which such theories of the Atonement as those of Dale and Denney have been based is that "the divine nature demands the inexorable and invariable punishment of all sins." This principle, which has generally been regarded as self-evident, has been stoutly denied by Dr. F. Vincent Tymms in his book entitled, "The Christian Idea of the Atonement." He admits that all sin *deserves* punishment, but he repudiates the idea that God always *demands* punishment. The ordinary course of reasoning, he says, is to the effect that the Eternal Throne cannot stand, and the order of the universe be perpetuated without the infliction of merited punishment; and "since all sin must be punished there must be some one to bear the punishment, and if the sinner is not to bear it himself, some one else must be found to bear it in his room and stead." [11] The crucial question, however, in this connection, is not "What does sin deserve? but, Is God bound by his own righteous nature always to deal with us after our sins, and to reward us according to our iniquities?" [12] If He is, His mercy is unrighteous. The conclusion reached is that "the forgiveness of unpunished sin under the

[11] "The Christian Idea of Atonement," p. 19.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

conditions stated by Christ is not a violation of law, or in any way a lowering of the divine standard of justice; but that, on the contrary, it is an essential element of justice, so that its refusal to the contrite is unjust and a breach of that moral order which is the eternal constitution of the kingdom of God." [13]

Dr. Tymms ought to have gone a step further and shown that the sacrifice of Christ itself is in harmony with law, that it operates according to law; and that the Eternal Throne remains unshaken because forgiving mercy is bestowed through the Atonement in harmony with law. The law of God is permanent and cannot be set aside without having the universe go to wreck. In God's dealing with sinful men in Jesus Christ law and love blend into one. At the cross, "mercy and justice are met together, righteousness and love have kissed each other." (Adaptation of Psalm lxxxv. 10.)

[13] "The Christian Idea of Atonement," p. 75.

XV

THE MARROW OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION

The marrow of Christ's mediation is His death upon the cross, and His death upon the cross, as spiritually interpreted, forms the burden of the gospel message. There is no evangel in the words, "Christ died"; for, viewed outwardly, His death is like that of any other man. It is only when we discern something of the purpose of His death, as it is revealed in such words as "Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8); or more specifically, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3), that we have found an evangel. The truth which constitutes the evangel, which it is the province of the church to proclaim to all mankind has been admirably summarised in the statement that Christ "died for us men and for our salvation." To unfold this truth in all its life-giving fulness is the supreme object of the New Testament. Speaking broadly, we may say that the Gospels tell of Christ's death, and the Epistles explain the significance of it. In the Gospels we have the fact, and in the Epistles the interpretation of the fact, so that both together give us the full unfolding of the doctrine of salvation.

Jesus had great difficulty in leading His disciples to appreciate the meaning and necessity of His death. Not until it was all over did they understand that He "must needs suffer and rise from the dead" before the

purpose of His coming could be accomplished. When He began to hint of His impending death they were staggered. How could redemption come of Israel if He was gone? The answer of Jesus to their doubt was, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit" (John xii. 24). He sought to teach them that He had to die in order that the Messianic hopes founded upon Him might be realised, and His life be made fruitful of blessing to the world.

His death occupies an essential place in the economy of redemption. It was not a mere incident—a mere human tragedy—but an event of moral significance; yea, the grandest, the profoundest event that ever took place in the moral life of mankind. We cannot agree with Bushnell when he says, "Christ was not here to die, but He died because He was here." Nothing can be clearer than that He came here to die. His death was the inevitable outcome of the course which He had voluntarily chosen—the inevitable result of the conflict between divine holiness and human sin which He saw to be involved in His coming into the world. Long before He reached Calvary the shadow of the cross lay across His path. He had a baptism to be baptised with, and He was straitened until it should be accomplished. He hastened to the cross. He surrendered to it gladly. "In the Sacrifice of Calvary," says Sabatier, "the victim is not devoted, he devotes himself." The Lamb of God was bound to the sacrificial altar by the cords of love, and not by the cords of fate. He chose to die. He laid down His life of Himself. "We can never

interpret His passion," says Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, "unless we keep in mind that every part of it was an *action* as well as a *passion.*" [1] His will was not only perfectly surrendered to the will of his Father, it was actively exercised in doing the will of His Father. His whole life of union with the Father's will was in keeping with His final sacrifice. Death did not come to Him in fulfilment of His mission; it *was* the fulfilment of His mission. His sacrifice was not complete until His life was given up in death. It was His death that gave to "his sacrificial life its saving efficacy; and it was the voluntariness of his death, together with the redemptive purpose underlying it which changed martyrdom into sacrifice, making it not a fate which he suffered, but a work which he achieved." [2]

In Christ's obedience Calvin found "the principal circumstance of his death." Ritschl, following in the wake of Calvin, affirms that the death of Christ came from "unbroken faithfulness to his vocation"; and he argues "if therefore his priesthood is to be regarded as availing for others, it can only be in virtue of that fact." [3] If this position be accepted, the common objection to the Atonement, that by making God's vengeance fall upon the innocent it violates the moral intuitions of mankind, is taken away. That the holy Son of God should voluntarily offer Himself up for the sins of men is something against which, on ethical

[1] "The Expositor," Am. Ed., Vol. IV., p. 559.
[2] "The Teaching of Jesus," George Jackson, p. 58.
[3] "Justification and Reconciliation," p. 484.

grounds, nothing can be said. Looked at as love's free offering His sacrifice must win the world's admiration.

The reason why it was necessary that Christ should devote Himself unto death was because those with whom He stood in sympathetic relations were sinners. It is always a costly thing to love sinners. Love for sinners is of the nature of compassion, and compassion means "suffering along with" others. In compassionating sinners Christ suffered along with them. He saw deeply into the heart of their sin; it stung Him; it wrung His heart with pain; and finally it killed Him. The cost of His love came from what was required by the condition of those upon whom it was lavished. He had to identify Himself with them, as the high priest of the race, not so much that He might bear the burden of their *welfare* as that He might bear the burden of their *salvation*. That they might not perish He had to die. Sin and death are so inseparably connected that to free them from death He had to free them from sin, and to free them from sin He had to pay the wages of sin. Hence it is stated that "the death he died he died unto sin" (Rom. vi. 10). Their case could be met by nothing short of this. To be able to say that he "died for us poor sinners' good" is not enough. What needs to be said is that He died for us poor sinners' sin; that like the Suffering Servant of Jehovah "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5). The particle "for" must not be watered down to the idea that He died "on our

behalf," or " for our benefit." It evidently means that He died in our stead. What could be clearer on this point than Paul's words " If one died for all then all died "? that is, all died in Him, His death being in some true and valid sense the death of all. In these words Pfleiderer rightly finds " the key to the Pauline doctrine of salvation."

It is said that a Bechuana man on hearing the story of the cross for the first time from the lips of a missionary exclaimed, " Jesus away from there; that is my place! " He was correct in thinking that that was his rightful place; and yet the fact that his place was occupied by another became to him when he understood the significance of the fact glad tidings of great joy. It is from " another " that man's deliverance comes. His release is gained by Christ's surrender. Christ's death is his death; Christ's triumph his triumph. Upon the bitter tree of the cross blossom his brightest hopes and sweetest joys. Out of the heart of a mystery which he cannot fathom he catches a vision of the truth to which Mrs. Browning gives expression in the words:

" But once Immanuel's orphan cry the universe hath shaken,
It went up single, echoless, ' My God, I am forsaken';
It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use these words of desolation."

And to that truth he persists in clinging with the deep and unshaken conviction that it will not fail him whatever may betide.

XVI

THE RATIONALE OF THE CROSS

The point of greatest pressure with most minds is not found in Anselm's question, *Cur Deus Homo?* They are not so much concerned with the question, Why did God become man? as they are with the question, Why, being found in fashion as a man, did He submit to the death of the cross? In other words, they are asking, Why was it necessary for the divine love to express itself in this particular way? It is, of course, admitted that the essential thing that Christ did upon the cross was to die. The manner of His death was purely incidental, the fact of His death was the significant thing. That He, the Holy One of God, should come under the law of sin and death is the thing which excites our deepest wonder. But while the form of His death was not essential, the form which it actually took gave to it peculiar significance. The fact that "he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8) is dwelt upon as affording evidence that His self-emptying had gone to its utmost limit. The manner of His death added to it a drop of bitterness. Crucifixion was not merely a painful death; it was a shameful death. It was a refinement of Roman cruelty, which bore the brand of national degradation. That Christ was able to "endure the cross, despising its shame,"

showed at once the completeness of His triumph, and the depths of His self-sacrificing love.

Had He died a natural death, passing away in some quiet chamber surrounded by loving friends, His death would have lost much of its power of impression. Men would have looked upon Him as one of themselves, who was a sharer in the common lot; but by suffering a violent death at the hands of wicked men, who hated Him without a cause, He was seen to be something more than a hapless mortal paying the debt of nature. His death challenged the world's attention and demanded some adequate explanation.

It is safe then to say that the form of His death if not necessary, was at least expedient. He died in the most impressive and effective way possible. His enemies who compassed His death were foiled in their ultimate design. In Peter's Pentecostal sermon we have the profound words, "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts ii. 23). These words show that while the delivering up of Christ was divinely determined, the act and article of His death was something for which wicked men were responsible. What God had determined they carried out unconsciously, yet freely; and they carried it out in a way which redounded to the furtherance of Christ's redemptive mission. The cross which they thought would be the end of Christ's power, proved to be the beginning of it. That Jesus Himself recognised the expediency of a violent death is clear from such prophetic utterances as "the Son

of man must be lifted up" (John iii. 14), and, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John xii. 32). He knew that by dying openly before the eyes of the world He would exercise magnetic power, because His death would stand out as the crowning act of human sacrifice. He knew also that His power to draw men unto Himself would increase in proportion as they came to understand the meaning of His death. Had this thing been done in a corner, His death, robbed of its sacrificial significance to the popular mind, would have been demagnetised.

The two things which can be confidently affirmed of the death of Christ upon the cross are that it is *revelatory* and *instrumental.* It is revelatory in the sense that it affords a complete revelation of God's love. It is divine love made visible, the disclosure of the divine heart; the final act in the drama of historic revelation. It reveals to us a God whose love took no account of cost, a God whose sorrow and whose suffering were measureless because His love was measureless. It shows how far divine love could go. Love to death is love to the uttermost. Divine love could go no further than the cross, nor could it meet the demands of the situation if it came short of this. When Jesus became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, "He emptied himself of all but love." The divine love of which He had spoken He then sublimely expressed. By His death upon the cross He removed forever all gainsaying regarding the love of God to sinful men. Because Christ died we now believe that God loves. "For God commendeth his own love toward us, in

that while we were yet enemies Christ died for us." "The death of Christ," says Sabatier, "was a blow which broke the alabaster box and set free the divine perfume of his heart, which was renunciation, sacrifice, love." [1] The fragrance of His sacrifice fills the world.

In the entire circle of human needs the one that comes first and stands the highest, is the need of an adequate revelation of divine love. Apart from this man's blessedness cannot be secured. To know what is most essential in God, to know Him as He really is, is to come into possession of life eternal. Revelation is necessary to reconciliation. Because man needs to know Him, and because he wants to be known and loved, God has been at great pains to reveal Himself. He has given the light of the knowledge of His love as man has been able to bear it. Yet how slow, apparently, has been the process. As the weary ages have passed, many have wondered why the complete revelation was delayed. It was delayed simply and solely because it could not have been understood sooner. God had to wait until the time was ripe before making His love flame forth from the cross. The sacrifice of Calvary was not something which could have happened at any other time. It was, as Dr. Tymms has said, "the consummation of a process which was never intermitted until the fulness of the time had come." [2] "In due season Christ died for the ungodly." When the preparatory stage of man's moral education was completed, God gave, in the cross, the revelation of the fulness of His saving love.

[1] "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," p. 273.

[2] "The Christian Idea of Atonement," p. 274.

Not alone of God's love is the cross revelatory; it is revelatory also of His *righteousness*. Christ was said to have been set forth by God "to be propitiatory through faith in His blood, to shew His righteousness, because of the passing over of sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God" (Rom. ii. 25). Here His Atonement is declared to have retrospective force, demonstrating God's righteousness, in His merciful forbearance with sinful men in the past; and, by parity of reasoning, demonstrating His forbearance with them in the present. The cross is God's method of justifying Himself in the eyes of the moral universe in His forgiveness of sin. It shows the fixed hostility of the divine nature to sin; it shows that the world is ruled in righteousness, and that in all God does, the ends of righteousness are met; and while revealing the inevitableness of law, it shows how divine mercy can operate in what Sir Oliver Lodge calls "a constant, steadfast, persevering universe"; it shows that there is nothing lawless or capricious in the way in which God exercises His pardoning prerogative; it shows, in a word, that His forgiveness is righteous forgiveness.

As has already been intimated, the cross is *instrumental* as well as revelatory. It is the weapon which God uses for the extermination of sin, and for the subjugation of sinners. It sets the divine love free in the way best fitted to make it redemptively effective. Through it God Himself is energising, acting directly upon the human heart. By a demonstration of His love, so transcendent, He makes His appeal to what is deepest in human nature. He reveals love that He may evoke it. He shows His heart that He may woo

and win man to Himself. He is mighty to save because He is mighty to love. It is the very nature of divine love to impart itself, that it may reproduce itself in other hearts. It shrinks back from no sacrifice that it may make itself operant for good. The object which it had in view is worthy of the sacrifice which it made. It is said that Buddha in a previous state of existence cut his body in pieces to redeem a dove from a hawk. That was a useless sacrifice. But to redeem a world of sinners, and lead them to realise the righteousness which Heaven requires, was well worth the price paid by Christ upon the cross. Nor did He grudge the countless cost, if the end could be secured. In lives redeemed from sin to God He foresaw the fruit of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied.

Of the way in which the power that resides in the cross operates upon the heart of man, no better illustration can be found than in the working of a mother's suffering, atoning love. Nothing liker God than a mother's love is to be found on earth; and there is nothing that enables us to see more deeply into the mystery of the cross. The mother who has a wayward son identifies herself with him so as to become the bearer of his sin. His sin is her sin. She suffers its shame; she endures its curse; she is bowed down with grief on account of it; it blanches her hair; takes the elasticity from her step; the light of joy from her eyes. For it she endures a life-long crucifixion. For it she dies daily. Her boy, careless and impenitent, may harden his heart against her silent, unreproachful, patient sorrow; but it is the mightiest human power unto

redemption that can ever reach him. If the sight of a mother's bleeding love will not dissolve his heart to repentance, and win him back to goodness, nothing else will. But greater even than a mother's love is the love of Christ for sinful men. Were all the mothers' hearts in the world fused into one, that one heart would be as a drop to the ocean compared with the heart which broke in agony upon Calvary for man's offences. Because of the deeper relationship between Christ and men, than between a mother and her child, Christ bears their sins in a closer sense than we can ever know. As the chief of lovers, He was the chief of sufferers. Loving unto death, He suffered unto death. His death was love's ultimate. Beyond that, even heaven cannot go. As the ultimate of love it is also the ultimate of saving power. If it is discarded there is nothing better held in reserve. For those who turn away from it "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x. 26). When the cross fails nothing can succeed!

But the cross never fails in any case when it has a chance to operate. It has lost nothing of its ancient power. To this, one of the leading Welsh preachers, who has kept his finger upon the pulse of the recent great revival movement, bears emphatic testimony. He says of that wonderful work, that "its heart has been the unveiling of the Crucified." By the vision of the cross, the affections of man have been won, their wills have been overmastered, and, in the language of Evan Roberts, they have been led to "bend to God." And what is true of the Welsh revival is true of every re-

vival from Pentecost to the present. Its power has come from the preaching of the cross. A cynical world has always questioned the adequacy of an instrument apparently so feeble to produce results so manifestly great; but the results themselves have clearly shown that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and that the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. i. 25).

XVII

THE VICARIOUS PRINCIPLE

The sacrifice of Christ is not to be looked upon as a strange incident in the life of humanity, but as in perfect harmony with the vicarious principle which is everywhere in operation. With deep spiritual insight F. W. Robertson remarks, "The Atonement will become a living fact only when we humbly recognise in it the eternal fact that sacrifice is the law of life." [1]

Germs of the vicarious principle are to be found in nature.

> "Life everywhere is fed by death
> In earth, and sea, and sky;
> And that a rose may breathe its breath
> Something must die."

Maurice represents the vicarious principle as "implied in the very original of the universe as involved in the very nature and being of God." He says that "it is impossible to imagine a blessed world in which it does not exist." [2] Dr. Newman Smyth finds traces of it in nature in "the direct working of the forces of vital repair and renewal," and also in "the special method of substitution," "for substitution," he ob-

[1] "Sermons," First Series, p. 294.

[2] "The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures," p. 118.

serves, "which even on nature's lowest plane involves rudimentary sacrifice, is one of the great natural principles of regenerative life. Vicariousness, as such comparative study may teach our theology afresh, is a principle laid in the very foundations of the world. Vicariousness is not contrary to nature's heart. There is an eternal atonement."[3] What John Fiske calls "the cosmic roots of love and self-sacrifice,"[4] penetrate to the lowest form of life. In his "Ascent of Man," Professor Drummond shows that the altruistic principle runs through nature like a scarlet thread, and that over against the struggle for life is to be found "the struggle for the life of others." And all agree that in the evolution of altruism by the cosmic process the highest stage is reached in maternity. No passion is stronger and deeper than the love of offspring. The love of the mother-bear as she gives up her life in the defence of her cubs is different only in degree from the love which led the Son of man to give Himself upon the cross for the world's salvation. In all true love, whatever be its stage of development, there is a vicarious element. "Love," says Dr. Bushnell, "is a principle essentially vicarious, in its own nature, identifying the subject with others so as to suffer their adversities and pains, and take on itself the burden of their evils."

The law of sacrifice is the law of every true home. Where one member of the family suffers, all the members suffer with him. Parents live vicariously, suffer vicariously. Children literally live upon their parents'

[3] "Through Science to Faith," p. 223.

[4] "Through Nature to God," Part II., pp. 59-127.

lives. God sends us children to make us unselfish. In a home of wealth and luxury a mother was heard to say, "When my children were young I gave them the best thing I could give them—I gave them myself. I surrendered a life of fashion and pleasure to be a companion to them, and now I have the reward of seeing them go out and do noble work for humanity and for God." Upon this principle of sacrifice, of which the mother-love is the highest earthly embodiment, every true home is built up.

The law of sacrifice is also a principle of social action. Upon it society is structured. There is in the world a great deal of vicarious *service*, service for others, service which is rendered without hope of reward. This service is of the nature of self-giving. Anyone who nurses a friend back to health gives to that friend something of himself. In some cases a life is literally given for a life. Anyone who would save others cannot save himself. It is only by giving himself for others that he can save others.

That there is in the world a great deal of vicarious *suffering* is equally apparent. The principle that "everywhere that the just man suffers, an atonement is made, which puts us to shame and purifies us," is, as Harnack remarks, "a truth which is indestructibly preserved in the moral experience of mankind." [5] The suffering of the innocent with the guilty and for the guilty, is one of life's deepest and most painful mysteries. It is a mystery which we cannot solve; but upon its dark background shines the truth that the sufferings of the innocent are a regenerative force in

[5] "What is Christianity?" p. 171.

life; that the silent, vicarious sufferers, who enter into Christ's experience and became partakers of His sufferings, are the world's redeemers; that their suffering love is embraced in the eternal law, through the working of which in a world of sin, the greatest possible result of blessing is secured. Those who through sympathy identify themselves with sinners, are, according to the measure in which they do so, made sin for them. The burdens which they lift from others' hearts they take upon their own. They become redeemers by enduring a cross. The Superintendent of an Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, N. Y., bore testimony to the truth that the sin for which some one does not atoningly suffer cannot be got rid of in the statement, "Some men are sent here under compulsion —almost driven here by their friends; and no such man is ever cured. No man has ever gone from the Asylum cured of his inebriacy unless there was some one—a sister, a wife, a mother, a maiden—who prayed for him, hoped for him, and wept for him at home." Commenting on the above, Dr. Lyman Abbott sums up the whole matter in this beautiful sentence, "The great redemptive power in life is the power of a suffering heart."

Our social redemption must come through sacrifice; and in no other way. The best things in the world have all been bought by sacrifice. "There is not a single victory of good but demands its victims, not a single progress but the ransom must be paid for it." [6] Patriotism involves sacrifice. The liberty which we

[6] "The Doctrine of the Atonement and its Historic Evolution," by Auguste Sabatier, p. 131.

enjoy, others have toiled and bled to win. Through war comes peace, through loss gain, through the blood of sacrifice comes the redemption of man. In his essay on "The Art of England" Ruskin says, "All the true good and glory even of this world—not to speak of any that is to come—must be bought still as it always has been, with our toil and with our tears." To the same effect are the lines of Dr. W. C. Smith, the Scottish mystical poet:

> "All through life I see a Cross
> Where sons of God yield up their breath,
> There is no gain except in loss,
> There is no life except in death."

No more imperative duty rests upon the Christian teachers of to-day than that of bringing the law of sacrifice into practical operation in all our social relations. Business is largely fratricidal. Men seek their own. Self-interest is allowed to degenerate into selfishness. The golden rule is trampled under foot; instead of sacrifice *for* others, we have the sacrifice *of* others. How to expel the demon of selfishness, how to awaken brotherly interest, how to lead men to love their neighbours as themselves, is the core of the social problem. All else belongs to the outside. To this problem Christianity offers the only real solution. Society is to be saved by the spirit of Christ's sacrifice entering into it. The more largely that His spirit of sacrifice takes possession of the human heart, the closer conformity will there be in social life to the law of love.

In the life and death of Jesus, the law of sacrifice received its highest manifestation. "The Word was made flesh to teach us that vicarious suffering, which we all see to be the law of nature, is the law of God, a thing not foreign to his own life, and therefore for all alike, a condition of perfection." [7] His life was a life of sacrifice, and His death was of a piece with His life. He gave Himself in the totality of His life, He gave Himself in His death. Apart from the antecedent life, His death would have no moral value; apart from His death, His life would have been shorn of its power. Christianity has its foundation in His person, its embodiment in His life, its vitality in His death, and its development in His resurrection. But it is in His death that His sacrifice reached its highest form. Sacrifice could go no further than that. We all believe that

> "... whether on the scaffold high
> Or in the battle's van,
> The fittest place where man can die
> Is where he dies for man!"

We admire the spirit of sacrifice which leads a patriot to lay down his life for his country, or a friend to lay down his life for his friend. More especially do we admire the spirit of sacrifice which leads anyone to give his life for the uplifting of the degraded. We listen with something of awe to the heart-revealing words of Robert Moffatt, the African missionary, "I felt as though I could die, as I do that this moment, for Christ's sake, and for the salvation of the heathen

[7] "Christian Mysticism," William R. Inge, p. 314.

around me," for we have the conviction that here the spirit of human sacrifice reaches high-water mark. But all such examples pale into insignificance before the sacrifice of the Man of Nazareth. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends; but God commendeth his love towards us in, that while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us."

The death of Christ is not only the central event in all history, it is also the mightiest force in the world's life. It keeps the world's heart from growing hard. Wherever it makes its tender appeal it destroys selfishness, awakens love, develops benevolence, inspires the noblest sacrifice, and becomes a saving force in life. As the climax of vicarious sacrifice, it is the climax of redeeming power.

XVIII

THE WHOLENESS OF CHRIST'S WORK

While recognising the place of supreme importance which the death of Christ occupies in the Christian system, we must be careful not to throw it out of its proper perspective by failing to put it into right relation to His life. The work of Christ is a unity, covering the whole of His life from the manger to the cross. Incarnation is the starting point, death its centre, and resurrection its completion. The death of Christ is not separated from His incarnation on the one hand, or from His resurrection on the other. All are parts of one redemptive unity; all are instinct with one redemptive purpose. His death instead of being an isolated event, is part of one great and glorious whole; instead of being an offering by itself, it is part of His great self-offering. Coming before it is the earthly life, following after it is the risen life, and from these it must not be separated. The Christ became man that He might die; He died that He might redeem; He rose again as death's conqueror that He might bring our sinful race into the actual realisation of His great redemption.

The wholeness of Christ's work is brought out in the words of St. John, "We know that He was manifested to take away our sins" (Ep. 3.5). The whole of Christ's life was a manifestation, a revelation of

what was central in the divine nature: namely, essential, eternal love; and this manifestation took place for the purpose of redemption. In all that He did and taught, in the life which He lived, in the death which He died, He revealed God as drawing near to man and acting upon him to deliver him from his sins. In harmony with this idea, John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus on His return from His temptation in the wilderness, pointed the people to Him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who is bearing away the sin of the world"; which evidently means, as Dr. A. Morris Stewart suggests, that in His temptation He was already beginning to bear away the world's sin.[1]

Through the appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh, a new light broke upon the world, revealing God in personal and saving relations; a new power came down from heaven to save a world of sinners. Revelation was for redemption. Christ manifested Himself that He might be known; He made Himself known that He might redeem. "For this purpose the Son of man was manifested that He might destroy" [literally, "unbind"] "the works of the devil." No one ever took such pains to reveal himself as Jesus did, no one ever bared his heart so completely. As the result of this self-manifestation, the Son of man is the best known of all the sons of men. We know Jesus as we can know no one else.

In the self-manifestation of the Son of man, Incarnation was the first step. And incarnation means the outshowing of what was hidden. It means goodness made visible; love embodied; holiness made alive; the

[1] "The Temptation of Jesus," p. 214.

divine ideal clothed in flesh and blood that it might become imitable; the eternal life outwardly expressed that it might permeate the life of humanity. Whatever there is of beauty, of goodness, of love in God, was enfleshed in Jesus for an ethical purpose. The self-expression of God was for the impression of man. It was for the changing of his heart; the subduing of his enmity; the awakening of his love; the taking away of his sin. It is not strange that those who see the idea of the Incarnation prolonged in the Atonement, look upon it as the central fact in theology. "The Incarnation—that is, the whole earthly life of Jesus Christ, is the identification of the human and the divine life, and in itself constitutes the Atonement," declares Archdeacon Wilson.[2] But the two must not thus be confounded. It is enough to say that in the Atonement the end of the Incarnation is realised. With clearer insight, Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall sees "the incarnation extending itself and consummating itself in the sacrifice."[3]

The manifestation of the Son of man which began with His incarnation, increased through His life, and culminated in His death. Death, the great revealer, made known the Christ to the world as nothing else could have done. In the suffering, dying Christ, we see into the depths of the divine heart as we can do nowhere else. And it is because the cross is the fullest, clearest, deepest revelation of divine love that it is the power of God unto salvation. So profoundly were

[2] "The Gospel of the Atonement," p. 88.

[3] "The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion," p. 136.

the Apostles impressed with the moral significance of Christ's death upon the cross that they sometimes seem to restrict the Atonement to this single element. If they did not at times magnify this cardinal fact out of its proper proportion, they at least made what was only a part stand for the whole.

In the self-manifestation of Christ, resurrection was the final step. It was after His resurrection that His disciples really began to know Him. By His resurrection from the dead He was openly declared to be the Son of God in power. His excarnation was as much a part of the process of manifestation as His incarnation. Indeed, the real Christ has not become known in His essential glory, until He is known no longer after the flesh, but as the risen, exalted Christ, the conqueror of death and sin. But what is of special moment to us in this connection is the redemptive purpose of the resurrection. This is expressed negatively in the words "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins"; it is expressed positively in the words "He was raised for our justification." His death must never be separated from His resurrection, nor His resurrection from His death. The declaration that "Christ died for our sins, and rose again," is the complete gospel. Instead then of saying, "Fling away your crucifixes. It is Easter morning in theology," let us say, "Cling to that which your crucifixes stand for, because the Easter morning of religious thought has come, and you are called upon to enter into possession of the larger truth, that, 'if we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,

much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life'" (Rom. v. 10).

The historical manifestation of Christ, although the highest that could be given, was necessarily limited. In becoming flesh, the Eternal Word manifested Himself as far as it was possible for the Infinite to manifest Himself through the finite. He submitted Himself to the restrictions of the nature which He assumed. He renounced not the possession, but the use of His divine attributes. Although "being originally in the form of God, He counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion like a man, He humbled Himself becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8). Christ emptied Himself in becoming man; He emptied Himself still more in taking the form of a bond-servant; He emptied Himself still further in becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And yet there is a sense in which the climax of His humiliation was the climax of His self-revelation. The supreme act of self-surrender was the supreme manifestation of condescending, self-denying love. His self-emptying was His glory. Because He stooped so low, "God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11).

The manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh is suggestive of something lying behind. Christ existed before He came to earth. He was "the Eternal Life" which was with the Father; and which in the fulness of the time was openly revealed to the children of men. Before His advent He sustained the same relation to men that He did after. What He showed Himself to be, He was everlastingly. He was a witness of the eternal, uncreated love. The life which He so freely poured out in service and sacrifice had been eternally pouring itself out. The heart that broke in anguish on the cross had always grieved over sinful, wayward men; within it a world's sins and sorrows had always been carried; but what had been dimly guessed by the few was now made manifest to all. The manifestation of the Son of man was the greatest event of all time. It was the disclosure of the world's deepest secret, it was the appearing in the sky of a new star—the star of human hope, yea, it was the bursting of the sun through the thick clouds which had obscured its brightness. It was the world's daybreak.

XIX

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

Jesus knew Himself. He could look into the crystal depths of His own being and see to the bottom. He not only knew who He was and what He was; He knew why He was here. He was conscious of His mission. He knew whence He had come, and for what purpose He had come. Some of His profoundest utterances were the sudden and unexpected outflashings of what was inmost in His soul. The religious consciousness of Jesus is a great deep which the mind of man can never fully fathom.[1] Yet while we cannot know everything that passed within His mind, we may know something; while there is much that transcends our utmost thought, there is much that comes within our mental range. "We have the mind of Christ," says Paul. We know something of what Jesus thought; we know something of what He felt; for in some measure His consciousness has been revealed. He certainly took great pains to make Himself known. No one ever

[1] The Roman Catholic theologian Oxenham, referring to the suffering of Christ as spiritual more than physical, says, "The agony in the Garden and dereliction of the cross represent in the language of prophecy an ocean of sorrow on whose shore we may stand and gaze down upon the waveless surface, but the depths below no created intelligence can fathom." "The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 304.

revealed Himself so thoroughly. His whole life was an unveiling of His inmost being. In His death the unveiling was completed. Hence, according to Schleiermacher, his Atonement, "which covers both His life and death, derives its value from His religious consciousness into the possession of which we may now enter by faith."

As we seek to interpret His divine consciousness by following its manifestation through the gospel story, we are impressed at the very beginning by the fact that He was conscious of an unique relationship with the Father in the fulfilment of His mission. He was the Father's "only begotten Son." His communion with Him was close and tender; His obedience to His will was without a break or flaw. He always did the things that pleased Him. In all the experiences of His earthly life He was walking in the way appointed by the Father. His whole life was one of unbroken conformity to the Father's purpose regarding His earthly mission.

In a world of sinners He was conscious of sinlessness. He knew Himself to be outwardly flawless, and to be inwardly free from the stain of evil. His conscience was unruffled by the faintest breath of guilt. No confession of sin ever escaped His lips. He felt the burning, blistering touch of evil; He felt the downward pull of the flesh; He felt the seductive enchantments of the world. His conflict in the wilderness when he encountered the three generic and age temptations, appetite, vain self-confidence, and worldly ambition, was no theatric display. His sinlessness was

a moral achievement won by battle. In resisting solicitations to evil, in the power of the spirit, He showed us how we, too, are to reach moral perfection. By entering the common struggle of the race He became "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 17-1).

He was conscious of His Messianic mission, as the mission to which He had been appointed, and for which He was being prepared. At His baptism He was not only publicly inaugurated into His Messianic mission, He also personally consecrated Himself to it. Then began His priestly identification with His people, and His priestly activity on their behalf. From the beginning a shadow lay athwart His path. He was as Bengel says, already "dwelling in his passion." Even in the time of His greatest popularity, during His brief Galilean ministry, He looked forward to a day when He should be snatched away from His disciples, and they should fast and mourn like a bridegroom who has been deprived of his bride. "From that time," it is said, "began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. xvi. 21). Later on He identified Himself with the suffering servant of Jehovah, saying, "That which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned

with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath an end" (Luke xxii. 37).

As the consciousness of His Messianic mission grew, He became increasingly conscious not only of His oneness with Israel, but of His oneness with the race. He knew Himself to be the world's sin bearer. Into His pure soul He gathered up the world's sin, expending its curse. Sustained by the thought of what His passion would accomplish, He went straight on through the gathering darkness to face the final struggle, well knowing that upon its issue the world's destiny hung. He was not the victim of a cruel fate. Upon Him lay the power of a moral imperative. That He, the sinless one, should suffer and die for sinners was a divine necessity. When the conflict deepened as the assaults of the powers of darkness grew fiercer, He never wavered. Conscious of the inviolability of His purpose, clad in the armour of an invincible purity, He exultingly exclaimed, "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." His cry in the garden was not a cry for the removal of a burden, but a cry for strength to carry it to the end. His cry upon the cross was not the utterance of one who was "blind from excess of light," but one who had a sense of divine desertion. Yet there was no real desertion. The Father's face was obscured, not withdrawn. The words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" in which, as Dr. Macleod Campbell has pointed out, He identified Himself completely with the writer of the Twenty-second Psalm, were the expression of

one whose faith in the sustaining power of God had not failed, however much it may have reeled. They were the words of one who, in the thickest darkness, still was clinging to the Father's hand. While consciously treading the wine-press alone He knew that outside of consciousness was the enfolding Presence; and hence at the heart of His loneliness was an abiding trust which voiced itself in the words, "*My* God, *My* God."

If He had at the moment no "miraculous prevision of victory," He had at least the sustaining assurance that in His death the divine purpose would be fulfilled.[2]

Never for a moment in that awful hour of agony did His suffering become self-centred, nor did His love for man abate. The passion of unselfish love which

[2] We read with painful surprise the following words from Dr. Amory H. Bradford's book on "The Ascent of the Soul": "Jesus never doubted God; or, if so, but for a single moment" (p. 311). If Jesus failed even for a single moment to live a life of faith in God, the offering of Himself which is made is not "without spot and blemish"; and we who trust in Him are leaning upon a broken reed. "One moment's reluctance on his part," says Dr. Moberly, "one moment's impulse to draw back, even one moment's hesitation of will, might instantly have ended all. But that moment never came." "Atonement and Personality," p. 115.

In view of the completeness of His triumph over evil we may well exclaim with Sidney Lanier:

> "Oh, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
> Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ."

ruled His life remained unchanged to the end, until in an accomplished redemption He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Faithful unto death, He won, in the hour of seeming defeat, His greatest victory. When the storm had spent its force, thinking of His Messianic mission as one concrete and glorious work, He triumphantly exclaimed, " It is finished " ; and commending His spirit into the hands of the Father whose will He had done, He bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Through all its stages of development the consciousness of Jesus was one and the same. The theory that He possessed a double consciousness is utterly untenable. Dr. Forrest distinguishes between the consciousness " which he had in his own proper personality as the Son of God in flesh, and that which he had as the representative of mankind." For this dividing up of consciousness there is no psychological or Scriptural warrant. There was one divine-human Christ who had one consciousness, one will, one heart, one purpose of redemption. In Him the divine and human were blended in one personality. That which in Him was the most human, came from His divine nature. When the divine acted through the human, it acted through that which was natural to itself. Hence that which was most unique in His work as a Saviour rested upon that which He had in common with the race of which He was part. His consciousness was the consciousness of God, yet up to a certain point it was essentially and fundamentally one with the consciousness of the

race. But it is in the added thing, the nameless quality beyond, that the basis of his Saviourhood is found. It is through one who was divine, and who knew Himself to be divine, that redemption has come to the world.

XX

THE PERSONAL EQUATION

A PROMINENT place must be given in Christian thought to the personal equation in the Atonement. That is to say, the truth about the Atonement is to be represented as embodied in Christ's person, and salvation as coming to man from Christ Himself, and not from something abstract from Him, called His work. Schemes of salvation are husks to the hungry heart. Salvation is *in* and *from* the atoning Christ who is personally living and active. Christ Himself says, "I am the way," the living way by which human souls pass into fellowship with the Father.

Brooding over this great truth, David Livingstone, the African missionary, made the following entry in his diary: "What is the Atonement of Christ? It is Himself. It is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God made apparent to human eyes and ears." These words from a practical man touch the core of the matter. Christ is the *Atoner* in whom God reconciles the world to Himself; He is the *Mediator* by whom God and man are brought together; He is the *Propitiator* through whose voluntary sacrifice the sorrowing love of God finds relief, and man finds access to God; He is the Redeemer who gives Himself a ransom for all, to effect their release from the guilt and power

of sin; He is the *Saviour* who by the sacrifice of Himself brings deliverance to the race. Salvation is in Him, and not in something which He has done and put to the credit of others. "*He* is the propitiation for our sins." "*In whom* we have redemption through his blood." We are justified freely by God's grace "through the redemption which is *in Christ Jesus.*" In these sample texts the emphasis is plainly put upon what Christ is, rather than upon what He has done; upon Him as the doer rather than upon "His work," as something separate from Him. His sacrifice was not something extraneous to Himself. It was Himself. Under the law, man gave something; Christ gave Himself. "He loved me," says Paul, "and gave himself for me." Salvation being in Him, it can be obtained only by personal connection with Him. The faith that is vital and saving must terminate upon the Christ who became dead, and who is alive forevermore.

Running through the history of Christianity is the continuous experience of men with regard to Christ. The first disciple and the last received their experience through coming into personal relations with Him as one "to love and be loved by forever." They broke with sin by forming a new attachment; Christ came into their hearts and lives, dividing between them and sin. His influence over them for good was moral and suasive, and hence resistible. When they yielded to it at one point, or in one thing, their soul's new birth took place. From henceforth the whole life was lifted up, and moved upon a higher plane. A new king sat upon

the throne, whose reign went on increasing until the whole life was brought into obedience to His holy will.

A service of great value has been rendered by the Ritschlian theology in the emphasis which it has given to the historical character of revelation. Its central idea is this—"in the person of Christ, God is here present and active, to save and to bless." Christ is the sole, sufficient Saviour, because in Him alone has the Father been revealed and brought near. In the very condition of spiritual bondage in which man now finds himself, God in Christ is present to save him. The thought of sinful man is thus directed, not to a plan of salvation, but to a living person. And that is all-important; for it is to Christ Himself as living and loving and working that we are to look for salvation. Faith rests on a personal Saviour who is ever at our side, ready and able to help and save. From His death upon the cross we learn what He is, and through that knowledge we come into real and personal fellowship with Him.

The present and eternal saving efficacy of the living Christ is to be traced to His resurrection, by which, after He had been brought under the power of death, He was given back to us. Because He lives He saves. "A dead Christ would be no Christ at all." The crucified one could become a Saviour only by conquering death. It is not the crucified Christ who saves, but the Christ who *was* crucified; it is not the dead Christ who saves, but the Christ who *died.* We are saved by a living, present Saviour. We are saved by what He

did *for* us on the cross only so far as through that He does something *in* us now. Through the historical Christ we know the living Christ; through the whole process of self-manifestation His redeeming influence is brought to bear upon us; through that which He did in the flesh comes His power to save in the present. The Christ who saves is the Christ of to-day, and not the Christ who once lived and who is now among

> "The dead, but sceptered sovereigns, who still rule
> Our spirits from their urns."

Religion is, at bottom, the personal influence of God upon man, and the Atonement is the supreme method by which that influence is exerted. The atoning Christ is the one potent personality in whom the Godhead is revealed, and by whom the redeeming love of the Godhead is made to operate upon men in the play of personality upon personality. Through the revelation of personal love comes personal influence; through the touch of the divine heart upon the human heart comes redemption.

To become operant, divine love was revealed in a human life. God was not only revealed *by* Christ, he was revealed *in* Him. Christ was more than the *revealer* of God, He was the *revelation* of God. In Him infinite love descended to earth. Out of the facts of His earthly life a pathway was made by which redeeming love might reach every sinful heart. His mission was not so much to preach the gospel as it was to *be* the gospel. He lived and loved, He died and

conquered death that there might be a gospel to preach. He is Himself the sum and substance of the gospel message. In Him a divine power for human redemption has been wrought out and brought in; and the moment anyone relates himself to Him in a vital, personal way, that power is transmitted into his heart, and he is saved.

XXI

THE ATONEMENT AS AN ETHICAL FORCE

The ethical value of the Atonement for a life of righteousness is seen in the power of obedience which it produces. The suffering of Christ, if unconnected with moral ends, would be a waste and mockery. The existence of a beneficent moral purpose alone is adequate to explain and justify the shameful cross.

Regarding the coming Messiah, the Angel of the Annunciation said, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,"—from the love of them, from the power of them, and hence from the doom of them. This is the negative side. Both the negative and positive side are expressed in the words, "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) Christ saves from sin and for righteousness. The revelation of His suffering love slays sin and quickens holiness; or to put it differently, it delivers man from the power of sin, and gives enforcement to the ethical demands which rest upon him as a moral being.

The ultimate end of the Atonement is restored character. The guilty past is forgiven that a better future may be attained; filial relation is restored, that filial obedience may be secured; the condemnation of sin is

taken away that the love of holiness may be awakened; the divine life is imparted that the sinner may be changed into a saint. Forgiveness is bound up with a radical change of heart in him to whom it is accorded. As forgiveness is the fruit of repentance, righteousness is the fruit of forgiveness. The sin that is blotted out is rooted out; the removal of sin's burden from the soul leads to the impartation of a new power which guarantees moral renewal. Reconciliation and regeneration are the opposite sides of one reality. Those for whom there is no condemnation walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

Dr. James Martineau, in a letter to a Chicago correspondent which was published after his death, referring to the ethical movement in America, and the tendency to convert Christianity into a simple code of ethics, said: "I do not myself believe in the efficacy of purely ethical communions. Short of the enthusiasm of personal affection between the spirit of man and the spirit of God, the blending of religion is not reached, and no permanent cohesion can be expected on the mere ethical ground of the relations between man and man." Coming from such a source, this statement is most significant. As a careful observer of religious phenomena Dr. Martineau saw that ethical teaching, unless it is reinforced by an all-compelling motive, is inoperative; he saw that unless there is power behind the ethical ball to send it singing to its mark, it can do no execution. The weakness of naturalistic ethics lies in the failure to take into account the power of forgiving love in the creation of character.

Christianity is not a mere system of ethics. It has the highest ethics, the highest type of virtue; but it has something more; and that something is moral dynamic. It furnishes a new "virtue-making power" —an adequate moral motive. The new motive power which it sets in operation is love, and love means power. Love turns the moral machinery of life. Love is "the fulfilling of the law," the power which carries to fulfilment all the law's demands.

The relation of the doctrine of the cross to the Sermon on the Mount is the relation of power to law. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the promulgation of the laws of the Messianic kingdom; and in the story of the suffering Christ we have God's method of awakening the motive by which these laws shall be obeyed. Wherever Christ's love is regnant in the heart, a spirit of obedience is engendered. "He that loveth," said the Master, "keepeth my words." Obedience is love's evidence.

Christ was no revolutionist in morals. He came not to annul the moral law, but to establish it; not to unbind its sacred obligations, but to enforce them; not to absolve men from its imperative demands, but to make these demands more binding, more commanding. He taught the spirituality of morality. He inculcated the necessity of inside purity. He demanded a righteousness which is vital and not merely mechanical. He gave to the world a morality which consists in works of love rather than in works of law. He presented to it the highest ethical ideal it has ever known, or can know.

But He did more. He sought to implant in the hearts of men an inward spirit and principle of righteousness. He sought to reproduce in their lives the moral ideal which He had held up before them, and which He had realised in His own life. His aim was not to do something for them which He could place to their account, but to do something in them which would be for their benefit; to impart to them the power by which they would be able to fulfil their moral duties.

Enabling power is something which man imperatively needs. He is weak as well as wicked. He cannot himself attain unto the highest life. Like the corpse which the old Spartan king tried in vain to cause to stand upright, he needs something within. He needs to have his enfeebled, disabled moral nature energised so that he may become strong to walk in the ways of God. This side of human need is brought out in the statement of Paul that "when we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). He died to make the strengthless strong. He died that He might become "the power of God" unto the helpless. One aspect of His great salvation is the deliverance from moral weakness. In harmony with this thought, Dr. D. W. Simon defines the Atonement as "a vital potentiation of humanity by Christ through his life and death." He sees in it "an energising principle," which evokes into active life the latent potentialities in man. Apart from this divine activity, man would be morally helpless; with it he is without excuse. He adds that "actualisation of these divine

potentialities in man takes place only through repentance and faith." [1]

It is said that certain savage tribes entertain the idea that the blood of the enemy slain in battle enters into the victor and makes him strong. This belief is suggestive of the fact that by the transfusion of Christ's sacrificial blood, souls who have become enfeebled by sinful indulgence are made strong. They are enabled to do all things within the sphere of duty through Christ, who strengtheneth them. Out of the love which His cross awakens in their hearts there comes a new law, a new conscience, a new ethical purpose, a new power of obedience. Duty is not only transfigured, but a power has come into the life to give it enforcement.

The redemptive power of love that brings forgiveness is illustrated by a passage in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," where the good King Arthur is represented as parting from his erring queen in mingled pity and shame. As he leaves her never to return, she prostrates herself at his feet, brokenhearted with remorse, and pours out her soul in the words:

"Gone—my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answered his farewell.
His mercy choked me.

. . . . .

And blessed be the King who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him and left me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God!"

[1] "Reconciliation by Incarnation," Chap. xvi.

A striking illustration of the principle of redemption through forgiveness is furnished by the introduction into French jurisprudence of what is known as "The Berenger Law." This humane law, which was passed in 1891, through the labours of Senator Berenger, provides that every offender who is sentenced to imprisonment for a period of not longer than two years, has his penalty suspended and ultimately remitted if he commits no new misdemeanour during the subsequent five years. The object is to appeal to the self-respect of the culprit. He is put upon a probation under conditions calculated to reawaken feelings of honour, to reanimate confidence and to resuscitate energy. During the first ten years which this law was in operation it affected 230,000 persons, with the remarkable result that the number of cases of second offences which formerly would have been forty-six per cent. of the whole, fell to less than five per cent. Thus it is seen that over forty per cent. of those who under the former system would have gravitated into crime, were saved to society.

A similar result is said to have been obtained in the case of an incorrigible soldier who had been so frequently punished for his offences that his superior officers were in despair. When about to be drummed out of the regiment in disgrace, the suggestion was made, "Try what forgiveness will do." As the offender was called in, he steeled his heart, expecting to have visited upon him the severest penalty possible; but when told that he had been forgiven, his heart was broken with contrition, a new motive-force took possession of him, and from that hour he became a new man.

And who can doubt that the forgiving love of God is more effective for reformation than the punishment of the sinner would be? It is "the sunshine in which character grows." It is productive of moral transformation. But let not forgiveness be confounded with mere indulgence; and let not the free forgiving grace of God be preached so as to be made an opiate to the conscience. "The finished work of Christ" has too often been spoken of as something done for man, entirely unconnected with anything done in him or by him; and much smug satisfaction has been derived from the thought that since Jesus did it all, nothing remains for man to do. This is a travesty upon the doctrine of grace. The charge that God's forgiving love relaxes the bonds of moral obligation, is repelled in the fervent words of Paul, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." The salvation which comes by grace through faith sets up the prostrate law in the heart of man, making it the centre of authority from which his life is ruled. No sooner rises the song,

> "Nothing in my hands I bring,
> Simply to Thy cross I cling,"

than the higher strain is heard,

> "Jesus, I my cross have taken,
> All to leave and follow Thee."

Clinging to the cross and bearing the cross are inseparably connected, the one with the other.

XXII

THE EVANGELICAL MOTIVE

THE word "therefore" in the first verse of the twelfth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which cuts the epistle in two, and gathers up into itself the whole of its doctrinal and practical parts, contains the reason and motive for Christian living. Behind the "therefore" there is a "because." *Because* of God's crowning mercy to men in the gift of His Son; *because* of the deliverance which Christ has wrought; *because* of the pardon of sin freely offered in His name; *because* of the help to rise which in Him has been made available to all, therefore men are besought to present their bodies a living sacrifice unto God. God having made the sacrifice of reconciliation, men are to make the sacrifice of consecration.

Between belief and conduct, doctrine and duty, there is thus in Paul's thought a necessary connection. The ethical is rooted in the doctrinal; from the doctrinal bulb comes the ethical flower. And yet we find Dr. A. B. Bruce asserting that "the ethical aspect of Christ's death is hardly touched on in the Pauline literature"; his contention being that Christ's death is looked upon entirely from "a theological viewpoint."[1] Nothing could be farther from the mark. With Paul, the theological is always the means of which the ethical is the end.

[1] "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 166.

If we inquire into the secret of Christian experience, if we seek to discover what it is that changes the direction of human interests and energies, what it is that calls men from a life of self-seeking and leads them to a life of service, we shall find it in the awakening of love to Christ. Dr. Martineau says, "Personal love of and gratitude to Jesus Christ I have found the most powerful motive among the clearest minds and the greatest benefactors of mankind." To the same effect are the words of Thomas à Kempis: "The love of Jesus is noble and spurs us to do great things, and excites us to desire always things more perfect." George Eliot had this deep well-spring of Christian experience in view when she said, "Neither heaven nor earth has any revelation until some personality touches ours with a peculiar influence, subduing it into receptiveness." The open secret of the religious life is contained in the words: "The love of Christ constraineth us." Those who have begun to realise something of the infinite indebtedness due to Christ are put under a strain to live, not unto themselves, but unto Him, and unto their fellow-men in His name. They have within them not merely what Dr. Chalmers called "the expulsive power of a new affection," but also the *impulsive, propulsive* power of a new affection. They are impelled and propelled in the way of Christlike service. The love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts is the power which pushes them forward to walk with bleeding feet in the way of self-denial, and which redeems their lives unto God by making them sacrificial.

Here we touch the weakness of much of our modern preaching. It is shorn of its power, because it has dropped out of sight the great evangelical motive which constitutes the living heart of the gospel; it has failed to work the great motive-force which is found in the sacrifice of Christ, and which impels men to go forth scattering broadcast over a needy world; it has failed to touch the hidden spring of motive contained in the words that Christ "died for all that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again"; in a word, it has failed to evoke that sense of personal obligation to Christ which is the very life-blood of Christian experience.[2] When men are brought to believe that Christ really died for their sins upon the cross, no other fact in all history can ever move them so profoundly, and awaken within them such a feeling of boundless devotion. For men cannot help seeing that "if they owe Christ aught, they owe him all." To their supreme benefactor they freely accord supreme affection. Moved by the compelling power of a fact so stupendous and so momentous as that which Calvary expresses, they are prompted to exclaim:

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

[2] In the death of Christ as "a judgment death for all mankind," Dr. Henry C. Mabie finds the true basis for missionary appeal. He says: "The missionary impulse and energy are grounded in the reconciling work of Christ." "The Meaning and Message of the Cross," p. 189.

In the fine phrase, "the correlative of grace is gratitude," Dr. Denney touches what is most central in Christian experience. The free gift of salvation creates in man a new sense of obligation. Because his sins have been forgiven "for His name's sake" (1 John ii. 12), he feels that we ought to be ready to "lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). Unto every disciple "it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer on His behalf" (Phil. i. 29). When a band of Turks came recently to a missionary of the American Board and asked him if he could secure their protection provided they should embrace Christianity, his reply was, "We follow a crucified Saviour." The call of Christ to every soul is a call to cross-bearing. A traditional expansion of the text, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me," is given in Macarius by the addition of the word "rejoicing" after "daily." Daily cross-bearing is to be done rejoicingly. After the same manner Peter exhorts, "Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice" (1 Pet. iv. 13).

Now, the joy of suffering for Christ's sake can come only through the impartation of His love. Without love, joyful cross-bearing is an impossibility. Without love, duty is a dead lift. It is love that makes anyone strong to suffer and to serve. Where love is, a sure and certain pledge is given that duty will be performed, however hard it may be; for love is the soul of out-

ward duty; and it is its very nature to pass into action. When love is dead, the moral self is dead, and holy activity ceases; when love is alive, the moral self is alive, and holy activity goes on. We live as we love. To love is to do right at any cost. Love is the heart of righteousness, the soul of sacrifice. It is an inclusive principle of action; the whole law being, according to Jesus, comprehended in the one word, love.

How to create love in the heart is the chief problem connected with the exercise of divine moral influence. Love concealed is inoperative; love revealed is love set free to work out its blest designs. The revelation into which God puts the strength of His mind, is the revelation out of which comes the strength of His heart. But before the power of God's revelation can be brought to bear upon man for the creating of love, it must be considered, and understood. When it is made the object of devout contemplation, the power which God has lodged within it will at once begin to operate, and will penetrate to the deepest springs of action. Love will awaken love. Men will love Christ because He has first loved them; and out of love they will give themselves to Him, as out of love He has given Himself for them. It is therefore vain to pray for love to Christ unless the mind be put in relation to the revelation which calls it forth. No one can love by a mere act of will. The mind must be turned to the cross if the hollowness of the heart would be filled with love; the mind must be kept fixed upon the cross if the fire of the heavenly love would burn perpetually

upon the altar of the heart; the mind must have a growing vision of the cross if the heart be enlarged in its love.

> "I sing the cross, stupendous theme,
> Glow, my heart, glow!"

When the cross is sung, the heart will glow with love; and from the glowing heart will come the transfigured life.

XXIII

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE RELATIONS

The ground of salvation is in the historical Christ. His death for human sin is an accomplished fact, an objective reality, standing out on the canvas of history, and as such it is the object of saving faith. In gospel preaching, the objective side of things must ever be put in the forefront, for it is from objective truth that subjective experience comes. The province of the preacher is not so much to explain how men are saved by the Atonement, as it is to preach the atoning sacrifice that men may be saved. In other words, attention is to be turned not to the *modus operandi,* but to the operant fact.

Because the relation of the historical Christ is the soil out of which all inward experience grows, Christianity has sometimes been called "the religion of the book," and the New Testament has been looked upon as the ultimate rather than the proximate object of faith. But the real value of the New Testament lies in being the repository of the facts concerning Christ. It is the connecting link between Him and the souls of men. Out of its pages His loving personality looks upon us. We know Him by knowing what it has to say about Him. In His life we have a vision of moral beauty, which becomes a subjective ideal; in His death

we have a revelation of divine love, which becomes a subjective force working for redemption.

The subjective Christian experience which is rooted in certain historical facts, that are related to Jesus Christ, is nourished from the same source. If the outward revelation is discarded, inward experience withers and dies. Bushnell frankly admits that "any strictly subjective style of religion is vicious. It is moral self-culture, in fact, and not religion."[1] Those who, like Origen, have tried to rise to a position in which they would become independent of the outward revelation suited to the masses, have in kicking away the ladder by which they have risen cut themselves off from connection with the solid facts upon which all experience must ultimately rest. The Christian grows in grace by growing in the knowledge of His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He gathers strength by transmuting objective knowledge into subjective power.

It is therefore clear that before the Atonement can attain its end, the objective gospel must produce certain subjective effects, and its historical facts become spiritual forces. The work which Christ has done *for* us must have as its counterpart a work that He does *in* us. His death for sin must become our death to sin. The life which He gave must be received; repose in what He has done must be connected with co-operation in what He is doing; the acceptance of His deliverance must be accompanied by the possession of His spirit. All that He did must be actualised in us. The scene of redemption must be transferred from the

[1] "Practical Uses and Ways of Preaching," p. 467.

cross of Calvary to human hearts; all that was transacted on the cross must be transacted in us. His sacrifice instead of becoming a substitute for ours is to be the example and inspiration of ours. So completely are we to become identified with Him that we are to be crucified with Him, to be dead with Him, to be buried with Him, to be risen with Him, to be glorified with Him.

Not the least service which the Protestant mystics have rendered to Christian truth, is the emphasis which they have put upon the subjective side of religion; although they have not always been careful to maintain the balance of truth by showing the relation which exists between objective fact and subjective experience. "That man is no Christian," says Jacob Boehme, "who doth merely comfort himself with the suffering, death, and satisfaction of Christ, and doth impute it to himself as a gift or favour, remaining himself still a wild beast and unregenerate. If this said sacrifice is to avail for me, it must be wrought in me." To the same effect are the words of William Law, "Christ given for us is neither more nor less than Christ given unto us. He is in no other sense our full, perfect, and sufficient Atonement than as His nature and spirit are born and formed in us." And despite his repudiation of mystical theology, Ritschl occupies the mystic's ground when he says, "The Atonement through faith produces its own elements in us, we being raised to the fellowship of that to which Christ descended in working out our salvation." [2]

[2] "Justification and Reconciliation," p. 279.

This was the substance of the Reformation doctrine. The Reformers found in the historical Christ, revealed in the New Testament, and particularly in His atoning sacrifice on the cross, the external ground of salvation; and in the heart of the believer, the evidence of salvation. Sometimes they went to the opposite extreme from the mystics, and unduly emphasised the objective side of things. In their zeal for the doctrine of justification by faith they did not develop in its fulness the doctrine of sanctification. One of the tasks which they have left the Christian teachers of to-day is to round out the conception of salvation, by showing the necessary and intimate relation between the objective and subjective elements in the Atonement of Christ; so that to the declaration of faith "Christ died for me," shall be joined the declaration of experience, "Christ liveth in me."

Approaching the subject from a somewhat different point of view, Dr. George A. Gordon says, "Atonement is the utterance in the sacrificial career of Jesus Christ, of the Infinite will as the ground of reconciliation for man with Himself and with the universe. Regeneration is the reinstatement in authority of the spiritual will in man." [3] In this definition, the objective and subjective aspects of Christ's work are preserved; the outward utterance of Infinite will, in Christ's sacrifice, being assumed to be the ground of its establishment in man. But in accepting this definition, care must be taken to guard against the danger of separating the Atonement and regeneration, so as to throw them out

[3] "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," p. 125.

of relation to one another. They are not distinct realities, but are rather the opposite sides of one reality. They are related to one another as cause and effect; for it is through the power of the Atonement that man is regenerated; or, to adopt the distinction already made, it is through the objective relation of Christ's redeeming love that there comes the subjective experience of His redeeming power.

XXIV

THE FUNCTION OF FAITH

In the earlier chapters repentance was set forth as the *sine qua non* of salvation, and the Atonement as the means of its production. Repentance, however, is only the first stage of spiritual receptivity. It finds its fruition or culmination in faith. Faith is the larger and deeper word. "Repentance without faith would be a beginning without its appropriate ending." Dr. James Morison, whose words have just been quoted, commenting on the text, "Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15), speaks of "the solemn call *Repent!* as the antecedent of the joyful call, *Believe!*"[1] Elsewhere he refers to repentance as "the reverse side of faith." The two together form a unity. The connection between them is indicated in the words, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21), repentance being there regarded as leading up to faith, and as finding its consummation in faith.

The function of faith is to bring sinful men into the possession and enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's salvation. The Atonement *per se* saves no one. It merely makes salvation possible. It brings within the reach of man a power by which he can be saved. By His atoning sacrifice Christ has brought the whole

[1] "Commentary on Mark," *in loco.*

world into a salvable condition. All men are not actually saved, but all men may be saved. Universality is in the Saviour, not in the salvation. The *nexus* between the universal Atonement and the individual experience of its saving efficacy is faith. By faith universal potentiality becomes personal power, universal bestowment becomes personal possession, and universal grace becomes personal righteousness. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not to all men indiscriminately, but "to every one that believeth." The saving power which is lodged in it enters the heart when connection is established. "Faith is the hand of the heart." It appropriates the gift which heaven proffers. "In the bosom of the word *world* it finds the word *me,*" and says of the Christ who came to be the world's Saviour, "*He* is mine!" and of His salvation, "*It* is mine!" This truth, which was much dwelt upon by the Reformers and by the Puritan divines, is thus expressed in hortatory form by the author of the "Marrow of Modern Divinity": "Be hereby persuaded in your heart that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you have light and salvation in Him, that whatsoever He did for the redemption of mankind, He did it for you." The same truth is contained in the words of Ambrose, "If any man does not believe in Christ, he defrauds himself of the general benefit, just as if anyone should exclude the rays of the sun by shutting his windows."

But faith is more, much more, than an act of appropriation. It is a spiritual energy; a dynamic force working to practical ends. It is the driving wheel in

the engine; yea, it is the propelling power that sets the driving-wheel in motion. Faith has been classed by Tolstoi as "among the forces by which men live"; it is *the* force by which Christians live. "The just shall live by faith." Of Abraham it is said that "he waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. iv. 30). In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn what wondrous things have been done by faith. James in his Epistle shows that true faith is never solitary. Where it is alone it is a mere pretence, being empty and dead. Faith and works are always conjoined. The way in which faith operates is indicated in the words "Faith worketh by love." Good works are done from faith by love. Faith is the mother of love, love the mother of works. "This," says Luther, "is the right and natural genealogy of good works." In Paul's teaching, righteousness is the natural fruit of faith. He speaks of "the righteousness which is by faith," as the only real and acceptable righteousness; and declares that in God's sight "faith is counted for righteousness," as the seed is counted for the flower. John Wesley seeing in faith a practical principle, exclaims, "Faith is the beginning of all good in thee, O man." He might have added, and the end of all good also.

Wherein lies the power of faith? Is it found in the mode of believing, or in the object believed? Plainly in the latter. The object of saving faith is Christ. Faith becomes mighty to save when it takes hold of a mighty Saviour. Its ethical value for a life of righteousness depends upon the measure of power which

it conveys into the soul from Christ; and the measure of power which it conveys into the soul from Christ depends upon what it discovers in Christ. Faith is never a blind act; but it is based upon some knowledge of Christ. It is created by a vision of Christ. It is hardly correct to say that "faith begins with a venture and ends with an experience," unless the qualification be made that faith never acts altogether in the dark. The venture of faith is a venture upon one of whom something provocative of confidence has been known. And when the venture has been made, confidence is felt not to have been misplaced; and the exultant affirmation is heard, "I know whom I have believed."

It would be a mistake, however, to say that the benefits of Christ's work cannot be measurably enjoyed by those who do not understand it. This would be tantamount to saying that only a theologian can be a Christian. A man may grasp the benefits of the Atonement without understanding the means which have led to their possession; he may rest in the Atoning Christ while having only the faintest glimmering of the truth which is expressed in His sacrifice upon the cross. In such a case faith is implicit rather than explicit, as it is in every instance where men fall back upon the general mercy of God.

Another mistake to be guarded against is that of making faith the *ground* rather than the *condition* of salvation. The ground of salvation is Christ. Faith is the inward condition which men must supply before salvation becomes theirs. They are saved *by* faith, not *for* faith. When they unite themselves to Christ

by the exercise of living faith, His Atonement becomes effectual to salvation in their experience.

In its last analysis, saving faith is something more than belief of the truth. It is trust or confidence in a person. Its final resting place is Christ. The New Testament is not the object of faith, but the revelation of the object of faith. It is the medium through which Christ is known. To find what it is seeking, the soul must get through the words of the New Testament to the actual Saviour—the true object of faith—and have personal dealings with Him. The fine old Scotch word "lippen," which Dr. Chalmers delighted to use, expresses this thought. He was wont to say, "The sinner has just to come with all his sins about him and lippen to the Saviour," that is, trust in the Saviour, leaving his case entirely in His hands. This element of trust in a person, which inheres in faith, is thus set forth by Dr. Candlish, another Scotch divine: "The virtue of faith is that it shuts us up into Christ, and that by it we embrace Christ. Through the oneness, all saving benefits reach us. There is no such thing as any one of them from Christ. We have them all only in Christ; in union and communion with Him. In Christ we are righteousness, being one with the Righteous One." What Dr. Candlish evidently means is that none of the saving benefits of the gospel are received *from* Christ except by those who are *in* Christ; and faith being the means by which this union is effected, it is the door by which the saving benefits enter. Hence the supreme importance of faith as the human condi-

tion of salvation. To produce it is the end of every revelation which God has given. Christ is objectified that faith in Him may be elicited. The word of the gospel in which He is revealed is the cradle of faith. It is also the creator of faith; that by which, as well as in which, faith is created. And it is the creator of faith because it presents to the soul's view Him who is faith's goal and satisfaction. "How shall we believe in him of whom we have not heard?" Only when we hear of Christ does faith become a possibility, and when it becomes a possibility it becomes a duty.

XXV

A SPIRITUAL REALITY

The Atonement is a spiritual reality. On the divine side it is something realised in the spirit of Christ. Into His pure spirit He took up the world's sin, bearing the huge burden, and bearing it away. We can never reach the heart of the Atonement until we get behind the physical sufferings of Christ, and, freeing ourselves from preconceived, materialistic conceptions, come face to face with the spiritual reality and experience of which these sufferings were but the outward expression. In His atoning work Christ "made his soul an offering for sin"; "he poured out his soul unto death." When entering the final stage of His life-long passion, He exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It was in the inner sanctuary of His soul that His great self-offering, by which the world's redemption was achieved, was made.

On the human side, as a work of reparation, it is something realised in the spirit of man, an essentially moral fact lying within the sphere of consciousness. It is man who receives the Atonement. The salvation which the Atonement secures is consciously enjoyed; the burden of condemnation is rolled away; the sunshine of forgiving love floods the heart, and the whole life is brought into moral oneness with God.

According to this view the Atonement of Christ is not something outside of man, but something reproduced within him. It is a spiritual force eventuating in a sacrificial surrender of the soul to God, in which something of Christ's supreme act of self-surrender is expressed.

These two aspects of the Atonement, as a spiritual reality, have been emphasised respectively by Dr. John Scott Lidgett and Dr. J. C. Moberly. The former in his book on "The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement," dwells at length on the thought that the Atonement is something more than an outward transaction; that it is a spiritual principle which "stands in vital relation to the spiritual and ethical conditions of those for whom it is effected."[1] It was of course necessary that the offering up of Christ's soul should find expression in an external oblation; but the external oblation is the husk, and the inner surrender of the heart and will is the kernel. "The physical suffering was the least part of what our Saviour endured; it was the meaning of the suffering that was in all respects so terrible."[2] And again, "The spirit of trustful surrender to the Father who smote him, of self-sacrificing service to the men who rejected him, of allegiance to the righteousness which appeared to fail him in the extremity of his need, makes his death, without possibility of comparison, the supreme ethical act of human history."[3] It is in this spiritual principle which underlies the crudest theories of the Atonement, and which alone persists, that Mr. Lidgett discovers the common element in which the most discordant theories

[1] p. 119. [2] p. 119. [3] p. 281.

are yet to be combined into a harmonious and organic unity.

Dr. Moberly, on the other hand, dwells upon the thought that the Atonement as a spiritual reality finds its consummation within the sphere of man's spiritual consciousness. "The Atonement as a transaction without ourselves—expound it as you will, is not yet consummated for us." "What is the real consummation of the Atonement to us? It is to have the very spirit of the Crucified become our spirit—ourselves translated into the spirit of the Crucified." "Calvary without Pentecost would not be an Atonement to us. But Pentecost could not be without Calvary. Calvary is the possibility of Pentecost, and Pentecost the realisation in human spirits of Calvary."[4] These pronouncements supply a much-needed corrective to the tendency to separate between the work of Christ for us and the work of the Holy Spirit in us; which are, in reality, the opposite ends of one work. What the Holy Spirit does in us is the result of what Christ has done for us. It is the continuation and consummation of the work of Christ.

There is a point at which these two aspects of the work of Christ meet and mingle. What is spiritual in Christ's sacrifice is transferred to man, and becomes his spiritual possession. The spiritual principle of the Atonement becomes a spiritual force in his life, bringing him into oneness with the life of Christ.

This end is secured by the personal identification of his life with the life of Christ. Something more is needed than the acceptance of Christ's work; there

[4] p. 152.

must also be the appropriation of His spirit. Condemnation is not removed by the sacrifice of Christ apart from the possession of a new, inner principle of life. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" (Ro. viii. 1. A. V.). No outward substitution of Christ for man will avail anything unless there be the inward substitution of Christ's will for man's will. The life that was given for man must be poured into him. The ideal which the life of Christ presents must become actualised in his experience. Dr. John Caird in his Gifford lectures, dwelling upon the necessity of spiritual participation with Christ, refers to faith as "a spiritual link that brings us into living union with Christ; so that not by any arbitrary supposition, or legal fiction, but actually in the fundamental principle of our moral life we become one with Him. It is not that the merit of the perfect righteousness and atoning sacrifice and death of Christ is, in some incomprehensible way, ascribed to us; but there is a profound sense in which they become actually our own—His sorrow, our sorrow, His sacrifice, our sacrifice, His perfect life in all its ideal beauty and elevation, the very life we live." [5] This actualising in us of the divine ideal is the end to which faith in the atoning Christ is the means.

According to the symbolism of St. Paul, a Christian is not one merely for whom Christ was crucified; he is one who has been crucified with Christ; he is not one merely for whom Christ died, he is one

[5] "Fundamental Ideas of Christianity," Vol. II., p. 226.

who has died with Christ; he is not merely one for whom Christ rose, he is one who has "grown together with him in the likeness of his resurrection." With Paul, this mystical aspect of religion existed side by side with its outward aspects. Yea, more; from the outward manifestation the power was seen to come which drew men into mystical union with Christ. Paul was crucified with Christ, *because* Christ had been crucified for him; he died with Christ, *because* Christ had died for him; he rose with Christ, *because* Christ had risen for him. That is not first which is inward, but that which is outward, and afterward that which is inward. The crucifixion of Christ is the means of which the crucifixion of the Christian is the end. Through the power of Christ's cross the Christian is spiritually crucified; being "made conformable unto his death," repeating his death in his life. He bears in himself the marks of crucifixion. This truth is brought out in the old legend which represents Satan as appearing to a monk simulating the likeness of Christ. The deception continued until the question was asked, "But where is the print of the nails?" The print of the nails is the one thing that cannot be simulated; and it is the thing which constitutes the distinctive Christian mark.

This participation with Christ, which makes His Atonement a spiritual reality, includes participation in His life. From Him all spiritual life comes. "In him was life," and through His manifestation in the flesh His life was ministered to man. The object of His mission is expressed in the words, "I am come

that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." To impart this life He had to die. To come into personal contact with Him as the crucified Redeemer is to live.

The life which constitutes the boon which Christ has promised to bestow, and which constitutes also the distinctive blessing of the new dispensation which He has brought in, is not bare existence, but "life that is life indeed"—eternal life, that is, life which is at once unfading in quality and age-long in duration. It is the life of Christ Himself. In all that He taught, in all that He did, and in all that He suffered, the end which He had in view was to give His life to the world. He is more than a model; He is an inspiration; He is more than a reformer; He is a regenerator. He is "a life-giving spirit," the creator of a new form of life. Those who are dead through trespasses and sins He makes alive. He bestows a new life that from it may come a new character. From an unseen centre is built up a new organism. Regeneration precedes reconstruction. From the sap which the root supplies comes the fruit of the vine. It is the nature of all life to function; and to this law the life of Christ in the soul of man is no exception.

In the teaching of the New Testament, the life-giving power of Christ is related to His death. He died that man might live. His blood is the symbol of life, and His blood shed is the symbol of His life given in sacrifice. "The life is the blood, for it is the blood that maketh atonement." But the shed blood gives no life unless it enters the soul. "Except ye eat the

flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves." The drinking of Christ's blood means the appropriation of His life as ours, the incorporation of His life into ours. When Jesus says, "the bread which I give you is my flesh, for the life of the world," the term flesh is to be taken as embodying His spirit which was given through His flesh for the life of the world. The flesh represents the totality of that outward expression of the divine in the human which was brought to its culmination in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. In the sacrifice which He rendered "in his own body on the tree," He gave himself for the world's life. His sacrificial flesh and sacrificial blood are the symbols of His sacrificial love, hence to eat His flesh and to drink His blood is to become a partaker of that sacrificial love which constituted the essence of His life.

Moved by the laudable desire to emphasise the idea of the Atonement as a spiritual reality, rather than as something lying outside of experience, Archdeacon Wilson in his book on "The Gospel of the Atonement," has made a thorough-going attempt to interpret the Atonement of Christ in harmony with the doctrine of the divine immanence. Beginning with the principle that "all that is essential in religious belief can be sufficiently verified by ethical experience," [6] he goes on to show that all theories of "a transactional atonement" founded upon the divine transcendence, being outside the sphere of consciousness, cannot be verified. The position taken is that the only adequate doctrine of the Atonement is that which tells us how

[6] p. 19.

Christ saves us by giving us His life. Revelation authenticates itself in experience by the transmission of life through truth. The fact that "Christ has infused new power into the world which has enabled myriads to struggle more successfully with sin in themselves,"[7] is a fact true to human experience; and it is this fact which is the central thing in the Atonement.

The point for which Archdeacon Wilson contends so forcefully, is true; but it is not the whole truth. A satisfactory theory of the Atonement can no more be built up upon the doctrine of the divine immanence alone than upon the doctrine of the divine transcendence alone. In the past almost exclusive regard was given to the doctrine of the divine transcendence; now the pendulum is in danger of swinging to the other extreme.[8] Archdeacon Wilson discards every system of theology which makes the Atonement a transaction having for its end the disposing of God to forgive—which is well; but he discards also the connection between the Atonement and forgiveness—which is not well. The God who interpenetrateth all is the God who is above all; the God who is the indwelling life of men is also the God who holds personal relations with men; and any theory of the Atonement is defec-

[7] p. 71.

[8] This danger is very apparent in the discussion now going on touching what is called "The New Theology." The balance between divine immanence and divine transcendence is for the time being destroyed. But there will be no cause to regret that discussion if it helps to emphasise the relation of the Immanent Christ to all mankind.

tive which leaves out of account either of these modes of divine self-manifestation. The Atonement is both transcendental and spiritual; it is first of all a historical fact and then a spiritual reality; something wrought without the soul, and something wrought within the soul; something to which the sinner, hopeless of self-recovery, can look for salvation, and something personally and experimentally real; the manifestation of unmerited mercy, and the stirring of a new life which blossoms into the happy consciousness of divine sonship.

XXVI

THE CROSS AN APPEAL TO THE IMAGINATION

In his posthumous work entitled "The New Evangelism," Professor Drummond affirms that the evangelism which is being evolved from the new theology will address itself mainly to the imagination. It will not state truth in logical, propositional form, but will fall back upon the method of Jesus, and make use of the things of nature and life for the portrayal of spiritual truth. It will present truth in the concrete as something to be seen rather than in the abstract as something to be reasoned out.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, whose prophetic discourse on "Our Gospel a Gift to the Imagination" foreshadowed the new evangelism, says of Christ that He is "God's last metaphor." He is the final form in which God has attempted to express Himself. He is not God reduced to human terms, but God manifested in fulness in human terms. All metaphysical representations of God find in Him their summation and fulfilment. All that human language has failed to express of God, that Christ is. He is the Omega of divine revelation.

Now, the thing in the revelation of God in Christ which makes the strongest appeal to the imagination is the cross. The cross is "the dramatic centre of Christianity." It is divine love visualised. It presents not

only a truth which we are to believe, but an object which we are to behold. It calls for the exercise of spiritual vision. The people of to-day, just as truly as those whom John the Baptist addressed, are called upon to "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus Christ is "openly set forth crucified" before the eyes of gospel hearers to-day, as He was before the eyes of the Galatians whom Paul accuses of having been bewitched, and led away from the truth (Gal. iii. 1). Wherever "Christ and him crucified" is preached, an appeal is made to the imagination; a picture of the suffering, dying Christ, to whom men are personally related, is held up before their mental eyes, and thus the supreme tragedy of history is made a dynamic force in the salvation of the soul.

Treating the cross as a great object lesson to the world, is in harmony with the method of instruction which was familiar to the Jewish people. The sacrifices which they were accustomed to offer were pictorial representations of spiritual truth; they were "the shadow of good things to come." They pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ, in which they were to find at once their explanation and fulfilment. It is also in harmony with the method employed by Christ to keep before the minds of men the central fact of Christianity. In describing the institution of the Supper Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." The ordinance of the Supper thus makes its appeal to the imagination. It sets before the world's

vision, in simple symbolism, the great truth that the death of Christ is Heaven's supreme effort for sin's removal; Heaven's unfailing remedy for sin's disease.

It is also in harmony with the usual way in which the revealing and appealing power of the death of Christ is sought to be made effective in dealing with the popular mind. The imagination of the poet plays around the cross and bodies itself forth in images which sing their way into the popular heart. The ritualist by the use of sensuous forms seeks to lift the common mind from the seen to the unseen. The Church makes art her handmaid, calling upon the sculptor to preach the cross in stone, and upon the painter to preach it on canvas. The old Passion Plays, like that of Oberammergau, and modern productions, like Wagner's "Parsifal," make their appeal to the dramatic instinct, reinforce the printed or spoken word, and cause the passion of Christ to stand out vividly before the minds of those who might fail to be impressed by the bare recital of the facts of the gospel story. It is said that the early missionaries to Norway made the rude Northmen believe that the mallet of Thor was the rude image of the cross. By presenting the truth in this concrete form, they through the imagination reached the heart, and brought these fierce barbarians to bow their stubborn necks before the sceptre of redeeming love. Much in the same way the preacher in these modern times may sometimes find the stereopticon useful in reaching through eye-gate those whom he has failed to reach through ear-gate.

In making the cross appeal to the imagination, there is, of course, the danger that the use of symbols as aids to devotion may lead to the outward representation being substituted for the spiritual reality, the sign for the thing signified. It is against this danger that the third commandment is directed. That commandment forbids the making of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, for the purpose of worshipping it. With many a devout Roman Catholic the crucifix no doubt takes the place of Christ. It is not designed to do so, but the tendency to rest in the external is too strong for weak, unimaginative souls to resist. A painting, while making the great sacrifice real and vivid, may touch the beholder merely on his æsthetic side; and may convey to him no spiritual impression whatsoever. The word-picture of a dramatic preacher may torture sensitive souls by presenting the crucifixion in all its harrowing details; and while strongly exciting feeling, it may not impart a particle of moral power. Upon one occasion Jesus rebuked an outbreak of sympathetic emotionalism, because it was tending to obscure the deeper meaning of His passion. When on His way to the cross He turned to the daughters of Jerusalem and said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children." This He said not because He scorned their pity, but because He desired their penitence. He desired that the eyes of their understanding might be opened to discern the spiritual significance of His cross, and that their hearts might be sensitised by repentance to receive the spirit-

ual impression which it was fitted to convey. There is nothing of moral value in Christ's passion when it is emptied of moral meaning, and converted into a mere dramatic spectacle. Unless it is transfigured in the glory of a redeeming purpose, the dramatic interest which it awakens will pass away without leaving a single trace of moral influence. It makes its appeal from the heart of God to the heart of humanity in a legitimate way only when the imagination becomes the handmaid of the judgment, and the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of what it beholds.

It will hardly be gainsaid that the strength of the appeal which the cross has made to the imagination has come from the recognition of the substitutionary element in Christ's death. It is only as men have related themselves to Christ's death as something with which they are personally concerned, and by which they are personally benefited, that they have felt its power to move and melt their hearts; to create within them a horror of sin; and to awaken within them a feeling of grateful love, which has become the source of personal righteousness, the mainspring of a life fully surrendered to the will and service of Christ.

XXVII

THE SACRAMENTS AND THE ATONEMENT

The two simple sacraments of the Christian religion are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the one standing for the initiation into the Kingdom of God, the other for development in the divine life. Both are founded upon the Atonement of Christ; and both are expressive of the soul's faith in Christ.

Baptism is a confessional act to which the assurance of forgiveness is attached. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter exhorts, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38). The pregnant but elliptical expression "in the name of Jesus Christ" means trusting in His name, resting upon His name; literally, standing in His name; that is, within the circle where His name is confessed. To the same effect are the words of Ananias to the penitent Saul, "Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling upon his name" (Acts xxvi. 16). The baptism which receives the seal of salvation is a baptism in which the name of Christ is confessed as the only ground of salvation. The name of Christ stands for what He is. To acknowledge His name in baptism is openly to declare dependence upon Him alone for salvation; it is tanta-

mount to declaring that "in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Those who thus confess Christ in baptism come within the sphere in which His saving power operates.

The Lord's Supper early became the central ordinance of the Church. It is the crown of Christian worship, and the most precious means of grace. Its observance was meant to be perpetual. Baptism as the symbol of the new birth is received but once; the Holy Communion as the symbol of progressive growth in the Christian life, and as the means of its attainment, is to be frequently repeated. The Lord's Supper is "a visible sign of the saving truth of the Gospel"—a symbol of God's mercy to man. It brings to view in a pictorial and impressive way the death of Christ as the ground of the sinner's acceptance and hope, and as the source of his spiritual life.

The words which Jesus uses in connection with the institution of the Supper comprise His most significant statements concerning the nature of His death. At first we are struck with the variations in the reports of these vital utterances, but as Dr. A. M. Fairbairn has pointed out, "these variations are easily explicable, and show, so far as the sacramental idea is concerned, that the validity of the ordinance did not depend on any uniformity of the formula used; for words so freely altered could not be conceived to possess some mystic or magic potency capable of effecting a miraculous change in the elements. As concerns the theo-

logical idea, the difference in the terms presents no contradiction, or radical divergence in the thought." [1] When Jesus took the bread and blessed it, Mark represents Him as saying, "Take ye; this is my body" (xiv. 22); Matthew makes Him say, "Take, eat; this is my body" (xxvi. 26). Luke's formula is, "This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me" (xxii. 19). In administering the cup, Mark records Him as saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (xxvi. 27). Matthew represents Him as waiting until they had all drank of it, and then declaring, "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many" (xiv. 24). Luke puts into His mouth the words "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you" (xxii. 20).

In substantial agreement with these reports is the revelation which Paul declares he received from the Lord regarding the significance of this ordinance; but whether he received it directly, or through the original apostles, he does not state. With him the words of the institution are, "This is my body which is for you; this do in remembrance of me." "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." To which he adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. x. 24-26).

1. The rationale of the sacraments rests upon the

[1] "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," p. 420.

necessity of giving to spiritual facts outward expression. They not only "show forth" important truths for the benefit of others; they also "effectuate" for the participant his secret faith by giving it embodiment in an overt act.

2. Both sacraments are based upon the identification of the participant with Christ. In baptism he is represented as resting upon Christ; in the Lord's Supper as living upon Christ. The newborn soul is fed upon sacrificial food. The bread and wine put into his hands by the Church into which he enters are symbols of the sacrifice by which he is henceforth to be nourished. He lives by the power of a communicated life. The flesh of Christ of which he is said to eat, and the blood of Christ of which he is said to drink, signify the humanity in which Christ lived and suffered, and through which His self-giving takes place. But as Moberly reminds us, "It is the body and blood not as slain in death, but as through the fact of death voluntarily alive,"[2] that is given in the Eucharist. The Christ whom we are called upon to remember in the celebration of the Supper is the Christ who died, and who through dying conquered death; the Christ who holds living and personal relations to us in the present; the Christ whose Real Presence is symbolised in the elements of which we partake. To those who in the observance of the Supper connect the Christ of history with the Christ of experience this solemn, tender rite cannot be an empty form, but must become the channel through which the richest spiritual blessings are conveyed.

[2] "Atonement and Personality," pp, 274, 275.

3. The virtue of the Sacraments is not in the fact but in the manner of their observance. Their use has been changed into abuse whenever they have been looked upon as possessing magical power; baptism becoming a mystical ceremony by which sin was washed away, and the Lord's Supper, the mechanical means of conveying miraculous grace. Paul warns against the awful consequences of the participant in the Lord's Supper "eating and drinking unworthily"; by which he does not mean being personally unworthy, but "not discerning the Lord's body." And there is equal necessity of warning people against being baptised unworthily by not discerning in that act their relation to their Lord. It is as baptism stands for real consecration to Christ, and as the Lord's Supper stands for real communion with Christ that they possess spiritual value. They are means, not ends. They were ordained as helps to the spiritual life. The danger lies in attaching too much importance to their outward observance. It is only as they express spiritual transactions that they become saving ordinances.

4. Both Sacraments express the covenant relations existing between Christ and His people. Baptism signifies the entrance into that covenant, or in other words, the act of covenanting to be the Lord's; the Eucharist signifies the sealing of that covenant with blood. The Synoptists and Paul unite in giving prominence to this feature of the Lord's Supper. Matthew and Mark say, "This is the blood of the covenant," Paul and Luke say, "The new covenant in my blood." All agree in making the blood of sacrifice

the bond of the covenant. Paul and Luke speak of this covenant in blood as something "new"; Matthew expressly declares that the blood of the covenant was shed for many "unto the remission of sins"; or, in order to the remission of sins. Just as by baptism we avow ourselves to be the Lord's, so by the Lord's Supper we enter into fellowship with our Lord and His covenant people, receiving the benefits which His death confers, and acknowledging the obligations which His death involves.

When Paul asks, "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" his words imply that it stands for that which brings the greatest blessings to humanity; that the reason why it is "the cup of blessing" is because the Christ who "tasted death for every man" drained to the dregs the cup of our curse. As the cup of sacrifice, it is the medium of fellowship, the means by which communion with Christ is established. And when he asks, "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" his words imply that our communion with Christ is through His body, in which, through the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself up to God in sacrifice on our behalf. That is to say, it is through His human nature in which He was revealed, in which He died, and by which He touches us, that we know Him and commune with Him. Thus the Lord's Supper is to us "a communion through sacrifice," "a feast upon sacrifice."

Like the Passover, out of which it grew, as fruit grows out of blossom, the Lord's Supper is a joy-

giving and joy-bringing festival. It is connected with joy-giving facts; it brings near to the hearts of men a joy-giving Presence; it introduces the acknowledged followers of Christ into a joy-giving fellowship; it binds believers to the one Lord in a joy-giving covenant, a covenant sealed in blood, a covenant which holds forever those who enter into it; a covenant which on the divine side never can be broken.

XXVIII

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ATONEMENT

The Atonement of Christ is the chief medium through which the Holy Spirit works for the salvation of the world. The divine power for human redemption resident in the cross by the agency of the Holy Spirit passes into action. The facts of the gospel form the channel by which He conveys saving grace to men; the acceptance of the gospel affords the occasion for Him to put forth His saving energy. He presses Christ upon the acceptance of men that He may make Him a sovereign power in the intellect, in the heart, and in the life, moulding and controlling the whole man.

The Holy Spirit is the universal agent by whom God is seeking to reach men. His presence is immanent in the world and in the human heart. From the beginning He has been working from within for man's redemption; but now He has found a new instrument with which to work, a new key with which to unlock the inmost chambers of man's spirit, a new lever by which to lift men up, a new power of appeal by which to break down the opposition of man to the will of God. By bearing witness to Christ He creates in man the filial spirit which Christ Himself possessed; by revealing the truth about Christ He communicates the life of Christ; by presenting Christ as the ground of

faith He makes him at the same time the source of experience.

The descent of the Spirit came at first upon those who had faith in Jesus as the Messiah; and afterwards He fell upon those to whom the gospel story was preached. And ever since, the manifestation of the Spirit in converting power has always been coincident with the preaching of Christ. His presence and saving power are unconditioned, but the extent of His efficacy is conditioned upon the means at His disposal of presenting at least the essential elements of the gospel message. Where Christ is best known the Spirit's power is greatest.

For the completion of His work Jesus looked forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Anointed by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, full of the Spirit, he was waiting to communicate to other men that fulness which resided in himself, but he was unable to do this until the cross was an accomplished fact."[1] When on the last day, the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, He stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living waters" (John v. 35). John explains that "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given," or more literally, "the Spirit was not yet," that is, in the plenitude of His saving power, "because Jesus was not yet glorified." Until He had finished His work and entered into glory, the Holy Spirit could

[1] "The Spirit of God," G. Campbell Morgan, p. 103.

not go forth into the hearts of men on His saving mission. By the cross a new way of spiritual ingress was to be opened into the moral nature of man. "Through the cross the Divine Spirit was to enter into the world in a higher form than he did at the first creation, and become the power of a new spiritual and eternal evolution in man." [2]

Jesus describes the mission of the Comforter as that of a witness-bearer, and an interpreter of Himself. He says, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father; he shall bear witness of me" (John xv. 26). And again, "He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 14). As a witness the Holy Spirit was not to speak for Himself, or of Himself. He was to speak of Christ, to hold Him up to the spiritual vision of men as the one "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." As an interpreter He was to make Christ known in a large, and spiritual, and practical sense. He was to take, not the words of Christ only, but "the things" of Christ and show unto men their inner meaning; and apply them to their spiritual needs. It is in this way that He is now carrying on the work of regeneration in human hearts. He is not man's Saviour; He is the agent by which the saving power of Christ is made effective.

A very subtle danger which besets the preacher of the present day is that of substituting the preaching of the Holy Spirit for the preaching of Christ. The

[2] "The Cross and the Kingdom," W. L. Walker.

acuteness of this danger arises from the large place which is being given in Christian thought to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is no longer "the neglected factor in the Trinity," but has come to His own in the evolution of Christian doctrine. It is well, therefore, to understand His ways that we may come into right relations with Him and secure all that He has for us, and intelligently co-operate with Him in all that He has for us to do; but we are not to make Him the subject matter of our preaching. He has no desire to be spoken about. It is not in that way He is honoured. He effaces Himself; hiding behind His message; concealing Himself while revealing Christ—as those who speak as His representatives ought to do. Understanding His ways we ought to do the things that He is doing, working along the same lines, working in the same spirit, and working for the same ends. We are to be to Him hands and feet and voice. The work in which He specially seeks to enlist our co-operation is that of making known to others what Christ is, by explaining to them the import of what He said and did. We are to point men to Christ as the Healer of their diseases, the Righter of their wrongs, the Redeemer of their lives. The function of the Holy Spirit and that of the Church is one. In one blessed call both unite in inviting thirsty souls to come and partake of the water of life freely. The end for which the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as her animating life is to enable her to make her testimony on behalf of Christ clear, strong, and effective. Instead, therefore, of preaching what has been called "the Gospel

of the Holy Spirit" we are to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the illumination and power of the Holy Spirit.

We see from what has been advanced how vain it is to pray for the converting power of the Holy Spirit unless we are fulfilling the conditions necessary to obtain it by preaching Christ to men. We see also how vain it is for anyone to expect the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Jesus" by which he is to be transformed unto the divine image, and brought into realisation of his divine sonship, unless the Spirit's witness concerning Christ has been received. The Spirit is the universal Christian gift. He is bestowed upon every one who accepts Christ as his Saviour. In the Gospel proclamation, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 39), repentance, baptism, the remission of sin, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, synchronise. They belong to the same party at the same time. He that accepts and confesses Christ has the Holy Spirit. Through the newly opened door of faith the Spirit enters into him, making his soul radiant with the glory of His presence.

XXIX

THE ATONEMENT CONTINUOUS

In the Atonement of Christ divine love found an opening by which it could flow continuously into the world until sin should be eradicated. The influence of the Atonement is continuous and progressive. Upon this point Principal A. M. Fairbairn in a passing sermon has the following weighty words, "The Atonement was not completed when Jesus finished his work on earth. In him it found and finds its ideal fulfilment, but not its actual completion. The isolation of his work from the universal work of God in the world, and from the Church, that is, the Christian part of humanity, is wholly without warrant in the New Testament." The same sentiment is expressed by the author of "God in his World," as follows, "The sufferings of our Lord, including his death, were but the manifestation in the flesh of the divine suffering from the beginning. Our sins have ever been borne by him." [1] "In the work of Christ," says Dr. George B. Stevens, "we behold a transcript of the eternal passion of the heart of God on account of sin." [2]

It is said that on the day that Beecher was called home a visitor asked him, "When will you finish your 'Life of Christ'?" After the visitor left he was heard saying to himself with a rapturous look upon his face,

[1] p. 138. [2] "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," p. 535.

"Finish the life of Christ! Finish the life of Christ! His life is never finished. It never can be finished. It goes on—it will go on through all eternity." So it is with the Atonement of Christ. There is a sense in which it was finished on the cross—for in the death of Christ the human stage of His redemptive activity was brought to an end; but there is another and deeper sense in which it is never finished. On the human side it is a living fact and force still in operation. As the most potent force in the upward movement of the race it will continue to operate until the last soul is saved, and the redemption of the whole world has been actualised.

Just as the incarnation was the temporary manifestation or outflashing of eternal truth, to wit, the abiding presence of God in the world, so the cross was the temporary manifestation or outflashing of the eternal truth of the actively redeeming love of God. Christ did not exhaust His redeeming love in the suffering of the cross. He still lives and loves, and He still suffers for our sins. His passion of nearly nineteen hundred years has been the great redeeming power in the world's life. The sight of a suffering Saviour, a Saviour who once suffered for men, "the Just One for the unjust," has wrung the heart with sorrow, and brought the sinner to repentance. To this must be joined the thought that the Christ who once suffered for our sins suffers for them still; that our sins crucify Him afresh. And surely the sorrow which they cause Him is an overpowering reason why He should hate them and turn away from them!

As the cross was necessary to convince the world of God's suffering love, we do well to look back to Calvary to see the evidence of that love; but we must not forget that it is as real now as it was then. Christ died once for all; but He did not love once for all, nor did He suffer once for all. His passion is continuous. He is still suffering on account of human sin. He is still bearing men's griefs and carrying their sorrows. He is still carrying on His mediatorial ministry, bearing the sins of the world away. What He did when on earth He may not repeat in its outward form, but the work which He did then is essentially the same as that which He is now doing. Contemplating the eternal passion of Christ as a present reality, Bernard of Clairvaux exclaims, "The passion of our Lord is here, this very day shaking the earth, rending the rocks, and opening the tomb. Nothing better could be done in the world than that which is being done by the Lord in these days."

High Churchmen have grossly perverted the precious truth of the perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice by representing it as perpetuated by Him in heaven, and as offered by the Church on earth, in the exercise of her priestly functions. The sacrifice of Christ was formally offered on earth "once for all." It was an event in history which has fallen into the past. It is the spirit of His sacrifice which is perpetuated. The only sacrifice which the Church can now offer, the only sacrifice she is called upon to offer, is a "spiritual sacrifice." She is called to have fellowship with Christ

in His suffering; fellowship with Him not merely in the agony which He endured, but in the agony which He endures. Every Christian is to become a sharer in His eternal sacrifice; he is to prolong and repeat the passion of His cross that the world may be saved. Paul refers to this fellowship with Christ in His sufferings when he speaks of himself as filling up on behalf of the Church, "that which was lacking in the affliction of Christ" (Col. i. 24). He felt that by his suffering he was contributing to the fulfilment of Christ's sacrifice. Christ was acting in him and through him; so that his afflictions were Christ's afflictions. In like manner "every suffering saint of God in every age and position, is in fact filling up in his place and degree the affliction of Christ, in his flesh, and on behalf of his church. Not a pang, not a tear is in vain." [3]

Through His disciples Christ is now offering Himself for the redemption of man; through them He is perpetuating and completing His sacrifice. In this deep sense, as a sharer with Christ in His redemptive suffering, every Christian is to accept the challenge contained in the familiar lines:

> "Must Jesus bear the cross alone
> And all the world go free?
> No, there's a cross for every one,
> And there's a cross for me."

To conquer the world for Christ and to bring it into subjection to His sway, the church which bears His

[3] "Alford's Greek Testament," *in loco.*

name must be a suffering body. She must be crowned with thorns before she can be crowned with glory. Her sceptre must become the sceptre of love, her sovereignty the sovereignty of sacrifice. She will gain regal power only by shedding sacrificial blood. She will become a conquering body in the measure in which she is a sacrificing body.

XXX

SOCIAL BEARINGS

Count Tolstoi defines religion as "the new relation of man to the world around him." This is a one-sided definition. It puts a part for the whole; and it puts that first which should be last. Religion is in the first instance the new relation of man to the God above him, and after that, and because of that, it is the new relation of man to the world around him.

By the Atonement of Christ man is set right in the whole circle of his God-ward and man-ward relations. By being brought into at-one-ment with God he is brought into at-one-ment with his fellow-men. He enters into God's thoughts regarding man. A secret bond of social solidarity unites him to all men in common sympathy and fellowship. Through the transformation of its units society is transformed. The leaven spreads from particle to particle, until the whole social lump is leavened. Because men have a corporate oneness, because they are parts of one vast spiritual organism, "the recuperative influence of the sacrifice of Christ penetrates in natural ways the whole social tissue." Wherever it goes a fraternal spirit is awakened, and social jarrings and discords are harmonised. As Christ adjusted the differences between Jew and Gentile, making of twain one new man, by

the blood of His cross, so by the same power He is levelling down all barriers, healing all divisions, and adjusting all differences between all ranks and classes of society. Around His cross the rich and poor meet together with hands clasped in fraternal fellowship. With the Crucified in the centre, master and servant, governor and governed are touched with a common love, and are led to feel that they have common interests. Into the world's turmoil and strife the tree of the cross is cast and the bitter waters are sweetened. Christ crucified is preached and the hearts of men grow gentle and tender; and that personal and social transformation is wrought which the prophet foretells in the words, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." With the same prophetic vision before him, John Hay, the Christian statesman, inscribed the lines:

"To heal a sick world's trouble,
To soothe its woe and pain,
On Calvary's sacred summit
The Paschal Lamb was slain."

The cross is the centre of a new kingdom; the symbol of a new kind of sovereignty. Wherever it is lifted up a standard of loyalty is erected in a rebel world around which all the conflicting forces of earth are reunited and reorganised. In the vision of the consummated kingdom given in the book of Revelation, the Lamb is said to be "in the midst of the

throne." Before Him the ransomed bow, giving Him kingly homage because through the kingly power of His sacrificial love the new order has come. And before Him men will bow to-day whenever they recognise the sovereignty of His sacrificial love. As the Son of man, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many, all authority has been put into His hands. To Him has been given the right to arbitrate between man and man, pronouncing moral ultimatums, and settling forever every dispute. His word is the supreme law, His decision the end of all appeal. But He is more than a judge. He is also a Saviour. By the blood of His cross He awakens a love which puts an end to fratricidal strife, sectional hate, race prejudice, and national enmity—a love which enforces law, gives cohesion to social institutions; and thus saves the world from social ruin. More than that, He changes social sinners into social saviours, making those who were dying of the dry rot of selfishness sacrifice themselves for others. When these ends are reached—when the kingdom of God enters human life, and man is brought into harmony with his social environment, Utopia will no longer be the "Nowhere," but will be the *Everywhere.*

To secure social ends, the cross must be applied sociologically. It must be applied to men not as isolated monads, but as members of one family whose interests are interrelated. For, if the primary object of Christ's mission was the redemption of the individual, its ultimate object was the redemption of the

race. From redeemed personality was to come a new social order. The salvation begun in changed hearts was to culminate in a changed society. In the establishment of the righteous reign of God over human affairs, all the ends of the redeemed life were to find their fulfilment. But how? By holding up the cross as a potent source of social energy, an unfailing principle of social action. The love which it awakens will always work out socially. It will be a positive force restraining from social wrongdoing, constraining to social rightdoing. It will work no ill to a neighbour, but will work him only good. It will get social wrongs to be redressed and social obligations to be fulfilled, by getting men to love one another. And this is the only way in which that perfect social state which Christ declared to be the final end of His earthly mission can ever be reached.

In the light of the cross the social problems of to-day are to be hopefully faced and studied. That the hope of Christ Himself for ultimate success lay in the power of His sacrifice to conquer the souls of men is evident from the statement that "he when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet" (Heb. x. 13). His expectation can be realised only through the proclamation, by the Church, of that gospel which tells of His sacrifice, combined with the manifestation of the spirit of that sacrifice in her life. The same challenge which the cross offered a few generations ago to feudalism, it is offering to-day to capital-

ism. By its ethics all things in the present industrial system are being tested, and by its redeeming power all wrong things are ultimately to be transformed. It will yet change society into the kingdom of God, in the only way in which the change can be accomplished; namely, by changing selfish egoism into self-sacrifice. The duty of the Church to make the redeeming work of Christ the basis of all her efforts for the bringing in of the kingdom was strongly enforced in the recent address of Dr. P. T. Forsyth, as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Speaking on the theme, "A Holy Church the Moral Guide of Society," he said, "The Church must reverse her ethics, re-read the cross in its own growing light, reinterrogate the genius of the gospel, and by it reconstruct historically the teaching of Jesus." She must also come under the power of the cross, that her conscience be made tender to every human appeal; her interest in social questions quickened; and her vision enlarged so as to see that all the movements for social betterment have their place in the developing kingdom of God on the earth.

It is vain to expect social regeneration by any other means. The triumph of social righteousness can come only through the triumph of sacrificial love, and the triumph of sacrificial love can come only through the triumph of the cross. Philanthropy requires to be fed by the love which the cross creates. The law of social service, "Each for all and all for each," will be a dead letter unless reinforced by the law which the cross expresses. To preach the cross is to set in

operation the mightiest force in the universe for the regeneration of sinful, selfish human nature. In the great social conflict into the thick of which the Church is coming, she ought to march "with the cross of Jesus going on before," taking for her motto, "By this sign I conquer!"

John Scott Lidgett, who is a leader in social settlement work among the poor of London, as well as an eminent theologian, referring to the relation of the Atonement to social progress says, "The renewal and perfecting of society is the task set before those whose life is rooted in Christ and inspired by the Christian hope. Of that renewal and perfecting, the resurrection of our Lord is the pledge, the Holy Spirit is the power, the holy city is the pattern. It consists, however, in the prevalence of the spirit of the cross, and is brought about by the method of the cross."[1] That is to say, the cross is the agency in the new evolutionary process of which a perfect social order is the goal.

[1] "The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement," p. 414.

XXXI

THE TIMELESSNESS OF THE ATONEMENT

In the ancient Church there was an almost universal belief in the beneficial effect of the sacrifice of Christ upon the generations who lived prior to the time of His advent. His death occurred at a certain place, and at a certain point of time, but its influence transcends the limits of time and place. He died for the whole race; for all who ever lived, or shall ever live upon the earth.

The history of every man is different from what it would have been but for Christ. "The race of men with Christ in it is essentially different in fact, and therefore in the sight of God, from the same race without Christ." God looks upon humanity in Christ; He deals with humanity through Christ. Some change has been wrought in the order of things under which we live, by reason of what Christ has done for the world.

What Victor Hugo said in his grandiloquent fashion of Waterloo may be said with all sobriety of speech of Calvary, "It was a change of front on the part of the Universe."

The retrospective and prospective influence of the Atonement is aptly expressed by John Flavel, the eminent English Nonconformist divine, in the words,

"The virtue of Christ's blood reaches back as far as Adam, and reaches forward to the end of the world; and it will be as fresh and efficacious then as the first moment when it was shed. The sun makes day before it actually rises, and continues day to us some time after it is set. So doth Christ."

Some such worldwide view of the death of Christ as a power working on through the centuries must have come to Carlyle when walking with Emerson in the neighbourhood of Craigenputtock, he said with strong feeling, "Christ died on the tree. That built Dunscore kirk yonder, that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence." "Calvary!" exclaims Dr. Parker, "it is no longer local, or geographical, or even terrestrial. It looks toward the eternal past as with the very agony of recollection; it looks forward toward the eternal future as to an inheritance bought with blood and secured by the oath of God. Calvary saves the Universe!"[1]

The Atonement is the expression of an eternal principle existing in the depths of the divine nature. The Atonement itself was a historical event, but the love which lay behind it, and gave it birth, was eternal. The cross merely brought to light the divine love which poured itself out eternally for its beloved. To some the Atonement has been a river in open sight, in whose cleansing waters they may constantly lave; to others it has been an underground stream, the secret source

[1] "The Life of Dr. Joseph Parker," by Dr. Wm. Adamson, p. 241.

of the moral verdure and beauty by which their lives have been adorned. Far beyond the line to which the name of Christ has spread, the influence of His cross extends. The revelation of the Atonement is restricted, but its influence is not. It is everywhere a power unto redemption in the world's life. The world with the cross in it is different from what it would have been with the cross left out of it.

The timelessness of the Atonement is brought out in the words "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), that is, slain in the divine purpose. The death of Jesus was not an unforeseen incident; it was included in the eternal purpose of God. Jesus was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Before the Atonement became a fact in history, the atoning purpose existed; and the atoning purpose gave direction to the outgoing activity of God throughout the whole progress of the world's history. Says Dr. Roswell D. Hitchcock, "Only God is the King Eternal, and his agony over sin is also eternal. This agony over human sin is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. God himself atones; and so atonement is both eternal and divine." [2]

An interesting sidelight, revealing the effect of the death of Christ upon all time, is found in the reference made by Peter to the preaching of Christ to "spirits in prison," after His resurrection. Whatever view be adopted of this obscure text, the retrospective force

[2] "Eternal Atonement," p. 11.

of the Atonement is implied in the preaching of the gospel in any form to the spirits in Hades. Farrar rightly sees in the words a reference to "the extension of Christ's redeeming work to those dead, who died before his coming." As revealing the purpose for which Christ preached to "spirits in prison," Peter says, "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (1 Ep. iv. 6).

It is because of the worldwide effect of the Atonement—it is because the love that the cross expressed moves upon the deepest springs of man's being, that he does not always sin and harden, but that he often sins and repents. The ascended Prince and Saviour who gave repentance to Israel gives repentance to all men.

Hence pangs of repentance as sharp and bitter as any that ever pierced the hearts of penitents in a Christian Church while they listened to the story of Calvary, have pierced the hearts of sinstricken worshippers in heathen temples. Whence came that repentance? Whence but from Christ? The desire to repent is always from Him. "The goodness of God," or as Godet interprets it, "that which is good, sweet, and gentle in God," "leadeth men to repentance." The quality in God which has such a blessed moral effect is the same in kind as that which melts the heart of him who gazes upon Calvary's bleeding victim. The common source of all goodness—the living foun-

tain of all saving power—is the heart of the Infinite. Divine love means atonement; the perfected revelation of love means atonement consummated in Christ; atonement consummated in Christ and received by man means the fulfilment of the purpose of redemption.

XXXII

THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES FULFILLED IN THE ATONEMENT

The redemption of Christ is not a thing of latitude and longitude. Universality of power resides in His Atonement to bring the universal purpose of divine grace to fulfilment. As the one mediator between God and man, He is able by the blood of His cross to reconcile all things to the divine plan. By the moral omnipotence of His self-sacrificing love revealed in the gospel, He is subduing all things unto Himself. From His cross as from a royal throne He rules over universal man. Imperial power belongs to Him by right because of His transcendent sacrifice. Because "he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross, wherefore God also highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. ii. 8-9). As the redeemer of man He became king of men.

Pfleiderer refers to the cross as a complete breakdown of "the religious social ideals" of Jesus. It was the very opposite of that. It was the means of their accomplishment. Jesus dwelt much upon the necessity of His death in order to the fulfilment of

"the purpose of God in creation and redemption,"[1] from His death, the Kingdom of God, which was the main aim of His life, could not be consummated. He spoke of the kingdom as about to come; he spoke of "the purpose of God in creation and redemption,"[1] which, according to Professor Orr, constitutes the kingdom, as about to be realised; He saw the world transformed by the love which the cross creates into a heavenly realm. His disciples, dominated by the Jewish conception of the kingdom, were looking for it to come in quite another way. It was hard for them to believe that it could come through the cross; that to bring it in their Lord had to die. Afterwards, when they saw in His death the beginning of His kingship, the crown of thorns, as the symbol of suffering love, became to them what it is to us, the symbol of sovereign power.

The fruition of God's eternal purpose is the reconciliation of all things to Himself by Jesus Christ, the fusion of the kingdoms of this world into a universal kingdom of righteousness. To accomplish this purpose is the ultimate end of redemption. "God hath made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he purposed in him, unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times to sum up all things in Christ, the things in heaven and the things upon the earth" (Col. i. 18). All things are to be gathered into one in Christ so that they may be constituted anew and formed into a holy kingdom. To restore all things to their unity, and bring them

[1] "The Christian View of God and the World," p. 354.

into harmony with the divine plan, is distinctly said to be the object of the cross. "It pleased the Father that in him [*i. e.*, in Christ] should all fulness dwell, and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. i. 20). In ways which are hardly discernible to our limited vision, moral power goes forth from the cross over a wide circle, purifying and ennobling whatever it touches. Through all the universe its virtue is felt. Wherever its attractive influence extends it draws together all the scattered fragments of good and reconstructs them into one grand and harmonious whole. There are hints scattered over the pages of Scripture to the effect that it is the power-centre of the universe, and that its influence is as wide as universal being. Angels are concerned in it. Into its mysteries they desire to look. They celebrated with song Christ's advent to earth; they strengthened Him in the hour of His agony in Gethsemane. And now, according to Paul, in the method and means of redemption, "the manifold wisdom of God" is made known by the Church "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places" (Eph. iii. 10).

As the world's Redeemer Christ is the world's restorer. He came into the world to introduce a new epoch of moral re-creation, to set in motion a new process of evolution by which the whole course of the world's history was to be changed. "Behold I make all things new," is the way in which He announced His mission. As the result of the working of the new

evolutionary power which He has brought into human life the everlasting kingdom of God has become an ever-expanding kingdom—a kingdom which develops internally like leaven, externally like a mustard tree—a kingdom which develops inwardly as a divine rule, outwardly as a divine realm.

The kingdom which is the final goal towards which the redeeming energy of Christ is working is called "the Kingdom of God," because God is its source and centre; "the kingdom of heaven," because it is moulded after a heavenly ideal, and governed by heavenly laws. It is not to be identified with the world beyond the grave. It is something that relates to the present world; something within the circle of daily life and of human history. Visibility belongs to its final stage. Internal at first, it gradually becomes external. It does not depend upon outward enactments, but upon the regulative power of the law of love within the heart. The kingdom has already come in every home, in every domain of social life where Christ's love rules the heart.

In establishing the kingdom by love Jesus had in view the completion of a purpose. Redemption was no afterthought. It was eternal as God Himself; and the cross was the predestined method of bringing it to realisation. Redemption is the central idea in creation. As Dr. Wm. R. Inge remarks, "It is precisely because the shadow of the cross falls across the world that we are to watch nature at work with admiration and hope."[2] In the light of the age-long process of re-

[2] Christian Mysticism," p. 319.

demption, the whole course of history and providence is to be interpreted. The eternal purpose of redemption is as yet unfinished, but as the silent procession of the ages unfolds the wondrous plan of God, it is seen that history is not fatality, nor chance, but redemption. A world in the heart of which has been planted the love of the cross can be going in no other way than in the way towards the actualisation of its redemption. In his suggestive book on "The Cross and the Kingdom," Dr. W. L. Walker shows the importance of seeing "the cross in its relation to that Kingdom of God towards which God has been forever working, the realisation of which on the earth, and ultimately in the sphere of the unseen and eternal, is the great divine purpose, the fulfilment of which alone can give an ultimate meaning to life in this world or bring permanent good to man." [3] That this kingdom to which everything is made subservient shall yet be established the cross is Heaven's pledge.

The sceptre of the kingdom has never changed hands. Christ has always been its bearer. Of the Son it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a sceptre of uprightness, is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. i. 8). Held in a nail-pierced hand that sceptre has gained new power. It is the symbol of righteousness by love. Nor has the nature of the kingdom ever changed. It was mediatorial from the beginning; it is mediatorial still. In the fulness of time its true nature was disclosed so that now we see the goal towards which things are tending; we discover also the adequacy of the means employed to the accomplish-

[3] p. 316.

ment of the end; and in humanity's groans, and tears, and sighs we discern the travail pains of the new age.

It was at one time thought by astronomers that around the star Alcyone of the Pleiades all the planets moved. One thing is certain, around the cross the centuries circle. It is the world's fixed centre. It has made the world what it is, it is making the world the glorious thing it is yet to be. In its light, the life of man is being transfigured. When Christ died on Calvary the hour of the world's sunrise came; the morning light began to purple the mountain tops. The light which then broke forth is spreading, and is yet destined to fill earth's deepest valleys. In the heart of man has been born the conviction that this redeemed world is not to set in everlasting night. Struggling after a higher life, like Milton's half-created lion, "pawing to set free his hinder parts," humanity hails the dawning of the day of complete emancipation, the day of universal jubilee. Groaning under the curse of sin, man lifts up his head because he believes that the hour of full deliverance draweth nigh. In the midst of the wreck and ruin which sin has wrought, with increasing brightness shines the light of the cross, making the present radiant with the glory of a quenchless hope.

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